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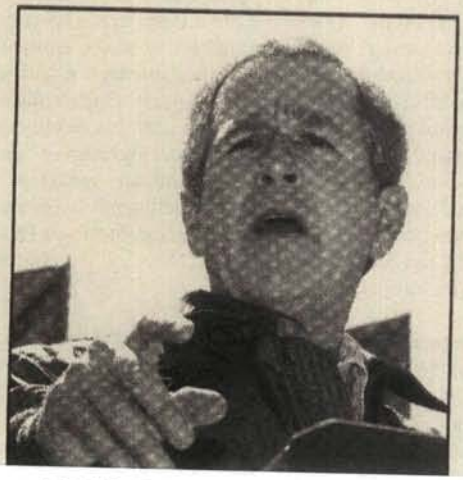
BUSH TO CITY: DROP DEAD

Vows to Exploit NYC, Not Aid It



GOP Congress Backs Stand

by Jack Newfield

THE FALL OF MEXICO'S 'PERFECT DICTATORSHIP'
by Daniel Wilkinson

BAGHDAD'S PEPSI GENERATION
by Naomi Klein

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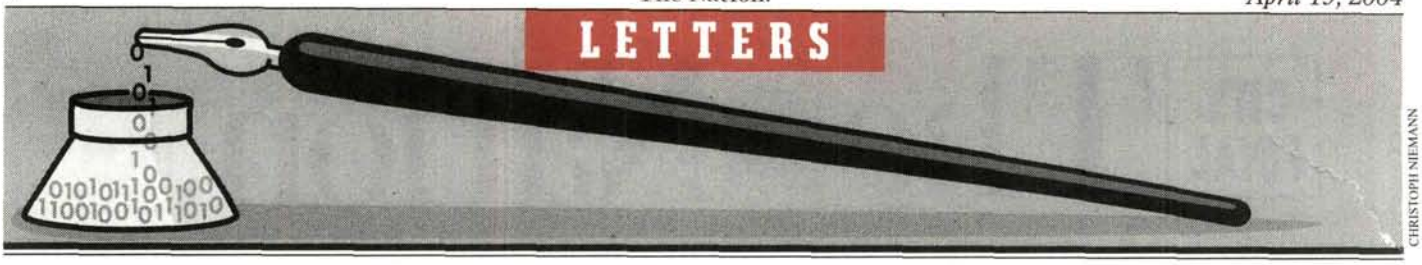

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

DEMOCRATIZING IRAQ

Research Triangle Park, NC

■ In her February 23 "Lookout" column, "Hold Bush to His Lie," Naomi Klein writes that RTI International is guilty of "quietly setting up town councils that are the centerpiece of Washington's plans and so widely rejected in Iraq they could bring the occupation to its knees."

There is certainly disagreement among Iraqis about the pace and structure of democratization. RTI International has made great strides since we began working on the local governance project in April 2003 to establish a foundation on which the Iraqi people can create self-government. Local governance programs are working in all eighteen of Iraq's governorates, engaging more than 19 million people in local policy discourse through local government entities and civil society organizations. Their effort is hardly quiet; their meetings are often boisterous and always animated. Our mission is to empower the people of Iraq, and we are helped every day in that effort by hundreds of Iraqi citizen-employees of RTI International. Although there is controversy about the possible function of the councils in choosing an interim national government, they are widely accepted, contrary to Klein's claim, in their communities. Klein is guilty of "one size fits all" thinking and discredits the citizens who are working diligently to devise various forms of democratic self-government at the local and national levels.

Rather than disparage the debate among Iraqis about how to establish self-government, we should celebrate their freedom to openly disagree without fear of being permanently silenced by a dictator or colonial ruler. We are proud to work with the Iraqi people as they take part in decision-making for the first time in their lives. By creating institutions of self-government and giving voice to citizens who were silenced under the previous regime, the Local Governance Project is succeeding in helping Iraqis take the initiative. RONALD JOHNSON
RTI International

KLEIN REPLIES

Toronto

■ I called RTI's role in Iraq "quiet" because it has attracted almost no media attention. I realize that the council meetings themselves have been anything but quiet: The fact that they are enormously controversial within Iraq—attracting debate, protests and even violent attack—was the subject of my column. Ronald Johnson chooses to see these raging controversies not as evidence of his company's failure but of Iraq's nascent democratic spirit, a convenient position, since it allows RTI to keep the money it's being paid to set up this discredited system of appointed councils.

Johnson also seems to see RTI as a neutral facilitator, helping Iraqis to help themselves. But RTI gave up the right to claim neutrality when it applied for a contract to remake Iraq's government before the country had even been invaded. That contract—worth almost half a billion dollars—is by far the largest in RTI's history. Two other firms that were asked by the United States Agency for International Development to bid on the deal refused to even apply. And in our interview, Johnson admitted that some of his own employees felt sufficiently uncomfortable about working for an occupying power (as opposed to the citizens of Iraq) that they asked not be put on the Iraq project.

Am I guilty of "one-size-fits-all thinking"? Maybe: I certainly believe that the principle of "self-government" requires that people govern themselves—without intervention either from occupying armies or their paid foreign contractors. NAOMI KLEIN

RALPH: RUN/DON'T/RUN/DON'T/RUN/

We had a huge response to our "Open Letter to Ralph Nader" [Feb. 16] and "Ralph Nader Replies: Whither The Nation*?" ["Exchange," March 8]. The mail was about even between those who said, "Run, Ralph, Run!" and those who said, "Ralph, Don't Run!" —The Editors*

Chicago

■ Dear Ralph: I agree with *The Nation*'s editors; do not run. Of course, you will be regarded by detractors as a populist Coriolanus; as sharing the Shakespeare warrior-hero's fatal attribute: hubris. Precisely the opposite is the case. In your candidacy, you are *underestimating* what you have accomplished, during these past thirty-some years, as Public Citizen numero uno. You, more than any other, have educated millions of Americans as to the abuse of corporate power. Of course, this has been duly noted by the politicos running for the presidency, including John Kerry.

David Corn, in his February 25 encomium to John Kerry, writes of his willingness "to challenge power, to pursue values rather than political advantage, to take risks for the public interest." That's a mouthful—with more than a touch of poetic license. Need we mention his gutlessness in the matter of the pre-emptive strike? Nonetheless, Corn does lay out a list of issues on which Kerry has taken stands that could only be described as Naderesque. The other candidates have, too, been so influenced.

This is your job, your destiny, Ralph, as our public interest watchman. You and your wondrous Raiders have exposed corporate venality as no one ever had before, with an influence beyond that of the best muckraking journalists of the Gilded Age. And there is a long, long way to go.

With Kerry as President (as a small-time gambler, I see the odds as better than even), your mission will be unchanged: keeping your gimlet eye on him just as steadily as you've done with his predecessors.

As an admirer, I don't want to see you in the history books as a footnoted token candidate. You are, to borrow a Dick Cheney phrase, big time. Ralph, don't run. STUDS TERKEL

Berkeley, Calif.

■ Your open letter to Ralph Nader demanding that he not run for President this year demonstrates your irrelevance to American politics writ large—whether Nader runs or not. You rush to advocate a static position and in your haste blindly ignore many dynamic possibilities inherent in an unfolding election year. Then you overconfidently predict a detailed campaign trajectory that you will only watch from the sidelines because you have simultaneously rejected having an effective hand in the process.

Consider just two examples of what you are willing to give up. First, a process whereby the Democratic nominee could expand and energize his progressive vote by cherry-picking concrete proposals from Nader and, second, *any* potential for Nader to take independent and Republican votes from Bush by making a case against his Administration that would not be credible coming from a Democrat. (As you know, non-campaign efforts to attack Bush will increasingly face formidable legal challenges.)

Beating George W. Bush while also keeping crucial issues in play this election year will indeed require that progressives "play chess on many levels," politically speaking; instead, *Nation* editors seem diligently committed to a game of checkers. That ought to suit Bush and company just fine. TAREK MILLERON

Brooklyn, NY

■ Dear Ralph: I wonder if you can imagine raising a child to the age of 18 or 20 only to see his (her) life thrown away, almost casually, by a government bent on world domination. Most of us for whom the Democratic Party is a continual source of disappointment and outrage do not have to contend with the dark side of this Administration's brutal policies, so careless of human beings. My priority this election is to stop the killing, even if it means voting for someone a lot less than ideal. You can still affect voter turnout, so do it. I urge everyone to vote to stop

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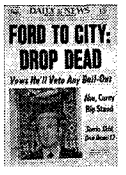

Cover by Gene Case & Stephen Kling/Avenging Angels, based on the New York Daily News *cover of October 30, 1975; illustrations by Christoph Niemann, Karen Caldicott*

EDITORIALS

Bush's 'Rat List'

Nixon kept his famous "enemies list." Now George W. Bush has his "rat list." An extraordinary succession of career civil servants, policy-makers and former appointees has come forward in recent months to blab—that is, share the truth about Bush with the American people. The most injurious is Richard Clarke, the melodramatic bureaucrat who directed antiterrorism policy for both Clinton and Bush. Clarke's message (Bush was obsessed with making war on Iraq, never mind catching Osama) resonates sensationally because it confirms the same point we learned from the others: On the most important matters, Bush cannot be believed.

David Kay was handpicked by the White House to lead the search for Saddam Hussein's evil weapons. Kay not only came up empty in his search but delivered a withering refutation of Bush's premise for war: the supposed existence of Saddam's terrible weaponry. Kay was especially believable because he clearly tried to deflect blame from the President. In a devastating insider account, Paul O'Neill, the former Treasury Secretary, described Bush as both light and cynical, manipulated and oddly detached from the serious business of governing. Richard Foster, an obscure actuary at Health and Human Services, popped up a few weeks after O'Neill to reveal that the actual cost of Bush's Medicare drug bill was concealed by the Administration, which lowballed Congress by $150 billion. Former Ambassador Joe Wilson blew the whistle on Bush's phony claim that Iraq was buying bomb-making uranium from Africa. And let's not forget Army General Eric Shinseki, who warned Congress—before the war began—that the Bush team had grossly understated the military manpower required to pacify Iraq.

These eruptions of truth-telling are not just the flap of the week from Washington. Taken together, they represent what may prove a momentous turn in the presidential campaign—one that could end up stripping Bush of his most valuable asset, his credibility as warrior President. The timing couldn't have been worse from Bush's standpoint. With Democrats having chosen their nominee, the White House turned on the attack-and-smear machine in an attempt to destroy John Kerry. Instead, the focus of the Washington talk shows and much of the nation's dinner-table conversation was Bush: whether he lied about this or was misinformed about that or maybe didn't understand what he was saying. The impact was not immediately reflected in the polls, but the numbers showed an erosion in his standing on the handling of terrorism. People will forgive a lot in popular leaders, but once the seed is planted—this guy is either lying or doesn't know what's happening—the consequences can be fatal. Ask Jimmy Carter. Ask Bush's daddy.

* * *

The grisly deaths of four US contractors in Iraq on the same day that five American soldiers were killed in a bomb attack tell us what we already know: The American occupation is not working. Attacks against coalition troops, which have been rising, now average twenty-six a day. As Naomi Klein reports on page 10, even Iraqis who cheered the arrival of the Americans are now wholly disillusioned by the corruption and chaos and enraged by policies that have led to more unemployed and desperate people. She quotes one businessman, whose two brothers were executed by Saddam, as saying that US proconsul Paul Bremer "has caused more damage than the war, because the bombs can damage a building but if you damage people there is no hope." What more will it take, beyond seeing the charred bodies of Americans hanging from a bridge, to persuade the Bush Administration to change course?

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COMMENT

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Laughing With Bush

When George W. Bush appeared before the annual Radio & Television Correspondents' Association dinner and joked about his failure to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, it was a challenging—and illuminating—moment for the Washington media. As Bush flashed photographs of himself looking about the Oval Office and quipped, "Those weapons of mass destruction have got to be somewhere," the betuxed and begowned audience generally laughed. I did not—and the next morning wrote what I believe was the first review critical of Bush's performance (www.thenation.com/capitalgames), accusing him of callousness and arrogance for making fun of the primary reason he'd cited for sending Americans to war and death, and for turning serious scandal (his use of false assertions to launch a war) into rimshot comedy.

Perhaps it was not surprising that Bush was so insensitive. By turning his prewar misinformation—or disinformation—into material for yuks, he was downgrading a controversy. Suspicious minds can wonder if that was the strategic intent of the bit. But did the media have to go along?

An extensive though unscientific review of the subsequent coverage suggests that many, if not most, in the Washington press corps saw Bush's shtick as no big deal. Was this a sign of Washington clubbiness? An indication that big-name journalists are removed from the substance of the political and policy debates they cover? Or that for them nothing is out of bounds—or sacred? I find it hard to ascribe motives to a group. But quite a few journalists—some of whom strike me as decent folks—were all too willing to cut Bush slack. On the *Today* show Tim Russert said, "Rather than be judgmental, let me just step back; ironically...the exact same joke was told to me two weeks ago by a very rabid antiwar Democrat." But had that Democrat asked Americans to die for a phony argument? Referring to somber comments Bush had made about US troops overseas, Russert noted, "If you look at the evening in the totality, the people who were there I don't think came away with some of the same conclusions as people who just heard snippets." *Wall Street Journal* political correspondent John Harwood said that to criticize Bush over this was a "cheap shot." Fox News's Brit Hume decried people who are too "easily offended" and said the joke "made [Bush] look good only in the sense that it showed he could poke fun at himself." His advice: "Get over it." Also at Fox, Tony Snow compared Bush's gag to Bill Clinton kidding about the Lewinsky controversy. (On CNN's *Capital Gang*, Al Hunt made the obvious point: "Nobody died as a result of the... Lewinsky miscues.") NPR's Juan Williams said the complaints were just politics. CNN's Dana Bash and Elaine Quijano both noted that the joke got plenty of laughs and nobody booed, as if that settled the matter.

Much of the media approached the story as just another tussle between Democrats and Republicans. On CNN's *Newsnight*, White House correspondent John King merely noted that John Kerry had issued a statement rapping Bush for the joke and that the White House had defended the remarks as appropriate. An AP story quoted three Republicans (including GOP chairman Ed

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Gillespie) and three Democrats expressing the obvious views. "You can hear the laughter," Gillespie said. "The people in the room obviously saw the humor in it at that moment, and to play it back now in a different context is unfair." (What different context?) The *Washington Post* also ran a partisan tit-for-tat piece. The *New York Times* carried a 255-word dispatch that cited "unhappy" viewers who had seen a clip of the event on CNN, and it quoted a Bush spokesperson.

Not all Washington journalists and commentators went with the just-a-joke or it's-all-politics lines. Kenneth Bazinet, a White House correspondent for the New York *Daily News*, penned a front-page piece on family members of dead GIs who were enraged by Bush's routine. *CBS Evening News* interviewed Sue Niederer, whose son, Lieut. Seth Dvorin, was killed in Iraq. She said, "You don't joke about things of this nature." MSNBC's Bill Press and Pat Buchanan agreed Bush had gone too far. So (predictably) did CNN's Paul Begala. On *Hardball*, Chris Matthews roughed up Tucker Eskew, a Bush campaign adviser, who defended the joke as "mildly self-deprecating." Matthews, noting he'd recently visited Walter Reed hospital, where about 3,000 seriously injured soldiers were being treated, pounced: "Would you have [Bush] tell those jokes as he tours the [veterans] hospitals?"

Overall, there was more excuse and explanation than outrage and examination. Before an audience of people who supposedly spend their days pursuing the truth, Bush joked about misstatements (if not lies) he had used to persuade (if not hornswoggle) the American people and the media. This was a real inside joke—that is, for Bush, Karl Rove and the gang. And few media insiders got it.

DAVID CORN

Haiti's Occupation

The American occupation of Haiti has begun again, now that Jean-Bertrand Aristide has been neatly pushed out. Again, there are 3,000 foreign troops on Haitian soil. Again, the Haitian premier has been handpicked by outsiders. And again, the Haitian people have been excluded from their own governance.

Gérard Latortue, hastily chosen by a team of US-approved Haitian "wise men," is a modern-day Phillipe Sudre Dartiguenave. Dartiguenave, who presided over Haiti during the first phase of the Marine occupation of 1915–1934, was a foreign-imposed caretaker and figurehead who, like Latortue, had almost no power to govern his own country. (The last time American troops were in Haiti was in 1994, when they restored Aristide, a democratically elected president, to the office from which he had been ousted three years earlier in a military coup.)

Latortue does not seem to mind the by now almost comic place he will hold in Haitian history—that of a stock figure, his position of cheerful, outside-imposed leader having become part of the formula whenever Haiti changes regimes. Latortue's jolly face is everywhere. Recently, he made a special trip up to Gonaïves, the first town taken over by anti-Aristide forces, and was photographed hugging various thugs who led the small but very effective rebellion. He called them "freedom fighters," although among their ranks are many well-known human-rights abusers.

Those who have watched the slow-cooked coup against Aristide over the past three years have observed with interest that not a single prominent member of the entrenched opposition to Aristide has been given a place in the new government. This opposition—made up of leaders of tiny political parties, former brief presidents, longtime presidential hopefuls and nongovernmental organization directors—was coddled, financed and trained in "democracy" by US organizations and groups funded by the United States. The lack of such a presence in the new Cabinet could lead to the suspicion that the supposedly democratic opposition, which for those three years refused all overtures for negotiation by Aristide and his party, was being used to foment and mask what was essentially a coup against democracy by the island's elite, in concert with right-wing elements of the Republican Party. (Latortue has also pointedly not included anyone from Aristide's party in his government.)

The opposition whines now about how it has not been welcomed into the bosom of the new regime, but if you successfully oppose a democratically elected government (and Aristide made repeated if not wholehearted offers of inclusion), you can't expect that the autocrats you've empowered will then include you in. In recent years, puffed up with importance, this opposition effectively ended all ability of the elected government to run Haiti and certainly contributed a little bit extra to Aristide's slide away from the rule of law. Only now are opposition figures beginning to see what their refusals have wrought. Useful idiots are not often needed after the real goal has been achieved, which in this case was simply the ouster of Aristide and the return to the Haitian status quo.

One of those whom Latortue *has* included in his Cabinet is Hérard Abraham, the new interior minister and a former general in the Haitian army, which was disbanded by Aristide upon his return to power in 1994. Abraham supports the re-establishment of the Haitian army, which historically has been the instrument through which the Haitian elite maintained its hold on the country and ruled it as a kind of kleptocracy. It was this army that ousted Aristide in 1991, little more than half a year after he took office.

Meanwhile, CARICOM—the umbrella organization of the Caribbean nations—has bravely condemned the ouster of Aristide, and the deposed president himself is staying with his family in Jamaica, where he remains uncharacteristically silent. The govern-

CALVIN TRILLIN

THE 9/11 COMMISSION HEARS FROM RICHARD CLARKE

When testimony came from Richard Clarke, he
Inspired White House spokesmen to get snarky,
Because, with words combining bite and bark, he
Revealed their tough-guys pose as pure malarkey.

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COMMENT

ment of P.J. Patterson, while showing signs of loyalty to a freely elected Caribbean counterpart, also does not want trouble with the United States, and has apparently asked for Aristide's silence in return for hospitality.

Aristide doesn't play by the rules—this is one of the reasons he became intolerable to his American foes. He flirted with Castro and welcomed hundreds of Cuban doctors to Haiti; he spoke on behalf of the poor and outcast; he attacked the elite, by name and vociferously (not that he was much of a leftist in economic practice). In the end, having been summarily ousted, he proved his lack of respect for diplomatic and international norms by ranting in cell phone calls to the international media about the Americans' "modern-day kidnapping" of a democratically elected leader.

Really not very gentlemanly.

In 1991, when Aristide was inaugurated, it seemed that Haiti had come through its darkest days and that a new phase was beginning. That was incorrect. Today, the army is to be reinstated, the elite holds the reins of power and a Franco-American occupation patrols the streets. The Haitian newsreel is being played in

(Continued on Page 21)

In Fact . . .

SOMETHING NEW ON THE DIAL

■ We welcome Air America, the new liberal radio network, which was up and talking on March 31. It boasts a lineup of gifted and witty hosts, including Al Franken, Katherine Lanpher, Marc Maron, Lizz Winstead, Chuck D, Janeane Garofalo, Laura Flanders, Robert Kennedy Jr. and others who will offer humor, satire, guests and commentary on stations in New York, Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Air America will challenge the notion that liberals can't do talk-radio. The conservative talk jocks have been purveying this canard to explain their monopoly of the spectrum. But the people behind Air America believe—and have invested their money in the proposition—that a main reason for the dearth of liberal views is lack of choice. Build a viable commercial network of liberal programming, they say, and the public will come. With the marketplace of ideas so skewed in this country, democratic dialogue is in jeopardy. Tune in.

KUDOS TO DANTO

■ Arthur C. Danto, *The Nation*'s art critic, has been named a finalist in this year's National Magazine Awards, the second time he has been so honored. Danto, Johnsonian Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at Columbia University and author of many books on art and philosophy, is known for his penetrating and original approach. A look at the artist Kazimir Malevich, which was among the reviews for which Danto was nominated, illustrates his characteristic method: Find the philosophical problem or question posed by the art, tease out the implications of that and show how the artist has done so as well, all the while setting the work in historical context.

CLEVELAND CONSCIENCE

■ Scott Sherman writes: On April 5, 1968, the day after Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, Roldo Bartimole resigned from the Cleveland bureau of the *Wall Street Journal*. It was his 35th birthday. The murder of Dr. King, he noted recently, combined with the general ferment in American society, "made it impossible for me to remain a neutral observer." From 1968 until his retirement a few weeks ago, Roldo was the conscience of Cleveland journalism, the closest thing the city had to a Lincoln Steffens or an Izzy Stone. A butcher's son, he began his journalistic career in Bridgeport, Connecticut, where, inspired by Michael Harrington's book *The Other America*, he took a firsthand look at slum housing conditions and discovered that many residents were forced to use space heaters because their apartments were always cold. "When some of those people became fire fatalities during the winter," the Akron *Beacon Journal* once noted in a profile, "Roldo was on the road to radical thought." From 1968 to 2000, Roldo's biweekly newsletter, *Point of View*, relentlessly exposed not only the machinations of Cleveland's ruling class—the politicians, the corporations, the real estate interests, the fourth estate—but also the city's charities, foundations and labor unions. In late December, plagued by heart trouble and the absence of a regular print outlet for his work, Roldo, 70, decided to retire. He departs with honor and with some advice to young journalists: "Tell the truth and shame the devils."

SCIENCE BLOCKADE

■ Potter Wickware writes: Scientific manuscripts are the latest target of Patriot Act–inspired surveillance and interdiction. The Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control, which enforces trade embargoes against Cuba, Iran, Libya and Sudan, says US scientific societies could get into big trouble (million-dollar fines, ten years in prison) if editors of their journals suggest ways for authors of papers from those countries to improve their contributions. Leading journals now say they will turn back submissions from the embargoed countries without review. According to OFAC's hairsplitting definition of "transactions," reviewing and editing—even spell-checking—are prohibited. In the real world, of course, editors invariably return scientific reports to authors for at least minor revision. Only about 150 papers a year made their way from the countries to US publishers before OFAC tightened its grip, but their perspectives on topics like parasitic and fungal diseases (Sudan, Libya), battlefield medicine, transplant surgery (Iran), vaccines, antibiotics and biotechnology (Cuba) stood out in the scientific press.

ON THE WEB

■ If *New York Times* columnist William Safire peddles disinformation as opinion it's no crime, says the ombudsman. David Corn, whose on-line challenge of Safire helped prompt the report, disagrees. Read James Weldon Johnson on US interference in Haiti, from the August 28, 1920, issue (www.thenation.com).

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Get in the zone with the mattress topper that molds to your body's contours

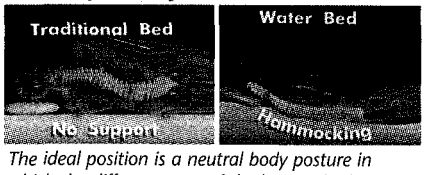
The Memory Foam Ultra mattress topper is cut into a grid pattern combining six different zones for variable support and a better night's sleep.

The 2-inch thick temperature-smart foam adjusts to your shape.

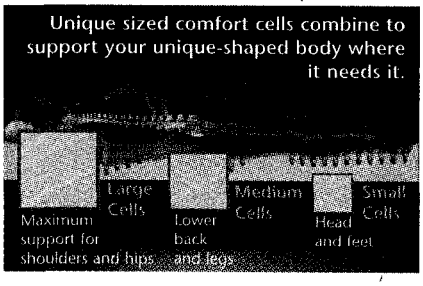
It's 3 a.m. You have exactly two hours until you have to get up for work, and you still can't seem to fall asleep. At this point, the phrase "tossing and turning" begins to take on a whole new meaning for people whose mattresses simply aren't giving proper support anymore. Your mattress may dictate your quality of sleep. Even if you merely suspect that your mattress may be outdated, that's when you need to take action. Some mattresses fail to support your spine properly, which can result in increased pressure on certain parts of your body. Other mattresses, sporting certain degrees of visco-elastic foam, can sometimes cost you well over $1000. Now, one of the world's leading manufacturers of foam products has developed an incredibly affordable mattress topper that can actually change the way you sleep. Introducing the future of a better night's sleep: The Memory Foam Ultra mattress topper.

Sleep Better™...Wake up to a better morning. The Memory Foam Ultra mattress topper is designed to give you a better sleep surface. Not only does it support each region of your body, but it's also temperature sensitive. With its various-sized "comfort cells," the 2-inch thick Memory Foam Ultra mattress topper combines six zones to support specific body area weight, which promotes a better night's sleep. The largest cells support your lower back and midsection, while the medium-sized cells support the shoulders, lower back and legs. The smallest cells support your head and feet. Combined, these zones provide variable support from head to toe. By using visco-elastic foam, the Memory Foam Ultra mattress topper also molds to your body contours to help prevent tossing and turning during the night. When you lie down on this amazing material, the heat and pressure sensitive foam reacts to your body's weight and temperature, so that it molds to your exact body shape. This means that whether you sleep on your back, stomach or side, your weight is evenly distributed and your spine remains in a neutral position. Other surfaces support your body at the shoulders, hips and legs only. This causes your spine to sag in other areas, which can often result in discomfort, and even back pain. You'll wake up rested, relaxed and ready to take on the day. Anyone who suffers from insomnia and back pain due to mattress discomfort can benefit from this technology.

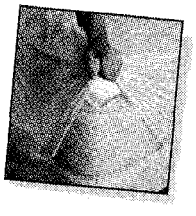
What could be wrong with your present bed?



The ideal position is a neutral body posture in which the different parts of the human body are supported individually and evenly. This is the secret behind Memory Foam Ultra, the mattress topper that turns any bed into the ideal sleep surface.


Unique sized comfort cells combine to support your unique-shaped body where it needs it.
Large Cells
Maximum support for shoulders and hips
Medium Cells
Lower back and legs
Small Cells
Head and feet

FREE heavyweight mattress pad included. Included with the Memory Foam Ultra mattress topper is a fitted mattress pad. It's heavyweight and quilted, and made of 200-count 100% cotton with a 14-inch deep stretchable skirt to fit a mattress up to 21 inches thick. The size of the mattress pad is determined by the size mattress topper you order.



Try it for yourself today! The Memory Foam Ultra mattress topper can change the way you sleep. Promote proper spine positioning, while enjoying relief from insomnia and back pain with this full-body support. It comes with a 5-year manufacturer's limited warranty and TechnoScout's exclusive in-home trial. If you are not completely satisfied, simply return it within **60 days** for the full purchase price.

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COMMENT

Halliburton Services Inc.

by Bruce McCall

Invoice:

Bill To: US Government

For: "OPERATION SPRUCE UP IRAQ"

ITEM:	TOTAL:
1st week anniversary bonus	$80 million
Pave Baghdad Int'l Airport runways; unpave Baghdad Int'l Airport runways; dig out aircraft paved over on Baghdad Int'l Airport runways; repave Baghdad Int'l Airport runways	$92 million
Laundry	$32 million
Remove 25,431,209 Saddam Hussein lawn jockeys	$23.3 million
Move midlevel staff to new hotel	$21 million
Move hotel to senior staff	$42 million
Suntan lotion	$5 million
Document suntan lotion use (see video), hotel pool	$12 million
Build hotel pool	$53 million
Pool furniture	$91.3 million
Chip in for ex-CEO Cheney's birthday gift, one leather-bound oil well	$35 million
Surcharge, goodwill bonus	$43.5 million
Air Force One rental re board of directors cookout, Crawford, TX	$12 million
Store Saddam Hussein lawn jockeys in Texas legislature basement	(no charge)
Finder's fee for locating Saddam Hussein lawn jockey storage site	$5 million
Gasoline pipeline from service station to Halliburton executive parking lot	$71 million
Rebuild Saddam Karaoke Palace, Tikrit* *Less proceeds from Grand Reopening Karaoke Nite	$17 million $32.00
Provide gasoline to coalition forces, 2 gals. at $2 million per gal.	$14 million
Correct gasoline charge to 2 million gals. at $2 per gal, per Auditor General letter	$14 million
Fill 31,284 spiderholes	$15 million
Excavate 27,631 cellars, basements, etc., mistaken for spiderholes	$30 million
Pay damages in re illegal removal of Saddam Hussein lawn jockeys	$30 million
Get one well in Iraqi oilfields working in time for President's visit (plus overtime)	$57 million
Purchase building materials for "Operation Spruce Up Iraq," Home Depot:	$5,000.00
Late bonus	$10.0 billion
Subtotal:	$35.6 billion
GRAND TOTAL:	$132 billion

Bruce McCall is a writer and painter whose latest book is *All Meat Looks Like South America* (Crown).

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

Antidepressants a Problem? We're Shocked!

Six years after Kip Kinkel, dosed up with Prozac, killed his parents and two students at Thurston High, in Oregon; five years after Eric Harris, dosed with Luvox, embarked on his day of slaughter at Columbine; well over a decade after naysayers, including Dr. Peter Breggin, the Scientologists and this columnist, raised the alarm about links between antidepressants and violence, the FDA has issued a warning that ten antidepressants can cause deeper depression and, for gosh sakes, even agitation, mania and other forms of violent behavior, even SUICIDE! Who says government doesn't work?

The FDA issued this ruling on March 22, and it applies to Prozac, Zoloft, Paxil, Luvox, Lexapro, Effexor, Remeron, Celexa, Wellbutrin and Serzone. Since the FDA cocks a nervous eye at such important constituencies as the pharmaceutical industry and its political reps in the White House and Congress, it is cautious about overhasty and tasteless prying into cause and effect. The FDA says it isn't yet clear whether antidepressants contribute to the emergence of suicidal tendencies, such as those that prompted Bill Forsyth, after several days on Prozac, to kill his wife, then himself. To move toward any conclusions in this issue, the FDA will be re-examining data compiled by analysts who conducted the original clinical trials for each of the products (technically, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, or SSRIs) about which warnings have now been issued.

So there'll be a pause, during which time the FDA can fend off concerns with comforting talk about "thoroughgoing reviews" and the drug companies can continue to mine their usual extortionate markups from the antidepressants, for which 213 million prescriptions were issued in the United States in 2003.

The actual review will probably end up with a ringing affirmation of the diligence of the FDA's procedures. In an excellent recent article in *Insight*, Kelly Patricia O'Meara quoted an attorney, Karen Barth Menzies, who has represented victims of SSRIs. According to Menzies, "the FDA's planned methodology…is to go back and look at the number of suicide events that were recorded during the drug companies' clinical trials.... The only thing that can come from this panel's review of the data is that they get the same number or *fewer* [my emphasis] incidents of suicide events which now will be based on the panel accepting that the researchers' evaluation was correct." You follow?

The FDA only lifted its backside momentarily off the cushion of complaisance because the British Committee on Safety of Medicines concluded last year that the "risks of treating depressive illness in under 18s with certain SSRIs outweigh the benefits of treatment." Zoloft, Celexa, Paxil and Effexor were impugned, though Prozac got a thumbs-up as having a favorable benefit-risk ratio, a conclusion that some have found astounding. A large-scale study of 2,770 patients on antidepressants featured in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* found that fluoxetine (Prozac) had the highest risk of deliberate self-harm. Menzies told *Insight* that in her view Prozac got excluded by the British committee because Lilly has "been dealing with this issue a lot longer and they're a lot better at hiding evidence of a causal link between suicidality and Prozac."

On this point Menzies knows what she's talking about. At the Forsyth trial her law firm got hold of internal Lilly documents displaying a sinewy economy with truth on the vexed business of suicidal ideation. Back in 1986 a draft of proposed "Precaution and Adverse Reactions" on a Prozac package contained one sentence briskly edited out of the final edition: "Mania and psychosis may be precipitated in susceptible patients by antidepressant therapy."

I don't see any way the pharmaceutical antidepressants will take a serious long-term hit from the FDA warning and impending review. It's like going after the cement and highway lobbies. There's just too much money involved. In the case of "depression," a vast new territory opened up for exploitation after the economy peaked in the mid-1960s and people stopped drinking dry martinis. The money is strung out along a golden conveyor belt that stretches all the way from the American Psychiatric Association's definitions of neurotic and psychotic conditions in the periodically issued *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, which ends up sanctioning medical reimbursements for drug therapy.

Brian's Back

It's great to see that *The Life of Brian* is being reissued, after Mel Gibson showed there's still a buck to be made out of the crucifixion. *Brian* is most certainly the world's greatest movie, made in partial response to the Pythons' exposure via the Redgraves, Vanessa and Corin, to the Trotskyist ravings of Gerry Healy's Socialist Labor League. Remember this?

Reg: What have they [the Romans] ever given us?
Revolutionary I: The aqueduct?
Reg: Oh. Yeah, yeah, they did give us that. Ah, that's true, yeah.
Revolutionary II: And the sanitation.
Reg: Yeah, all right, I'll grant you the aqueduct and sanitation, the two things the Romans have done.
Matthias: And the roads.
Reg: Oh, yeah, obviously the roads....
Revolutionary III: Irrigation.
Revolutionary I: Medicine.
Revolutionary IV: Education.
Reg: Yeah, yeah, all right, fair enough.
Revolutionary V: And the wine.
Revolutionary VI: Public baths.
Loretta: And it's safe to walk in the streets at night now, Reg.
Reg: All right, but apart from the sanitation, the medicine, education, wine, public order, irrigation, roads, the freshwater system and public health, what have the Romans ever done for us?
Revolutionary I: Brought peace?
Reg: Oh, peace! Shut up! ■

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NAOMI KLEIN

Let's Make Enemies

Baghdad

"Do you have any rooms?" we ask the hotelier.

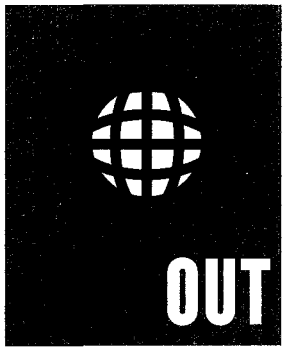
She looks us over, dwelling on my travel partner's bald, white head.

"No," she replies.

We try not to notice that there are sixty room keys in pigeonholes behind her desk—the place is empty.

"Will you have a room soon? Maybe next week?"

She hesitates. "Ahh… No."



We return to our current hotel—the one we want to leave because there are bets on when it is going to get hit—and flick on the TV: The BBC is showing footage of Richard Clarke's testimony before the September 11 Commission, and a couple of pundits are arguing about whether invading Iraq has made America safer.

They should try finding a hotel room in this city, where the US occupation has unleashed a wave of anti-American rage so intense that it now extends not only to US troops, occupation officials and their contractors but also to foreign journalists, aid workers, their translators and pretty much anyone else associated with the Americans. Which is why we couldn't begrudge the hotelier her decision: If you want to survive in Iraq, it's wise to stay the hell away from people who look like us. (We thought about explaining that we were Canadians, but all the American reporters are sporting the maple leaf—that is, when they aren't trying to disappear behind their newly purchased headscarves.)

US occupation chief Paul Bremer hasn't started wearing a hijab yet, and is instead tackling the rise of anti-Americanism with his usual foresight. Baghdad is blanketed with inept psy-ops organs like *Baghdad Now*, filled with fawning articles about how Americans are teaching Iraqis about press freedom. "I never thought before that the Coalition could do a great thing for the Iraqi people," one trainee is quoted saying. "Now I can see it on my eyes what they are doing good things for my country and the accomplishment they made. I wish my people can see that, the way I see it."

Unfortunately, the Iraqi people recently saw another version of press freedom when Bremer ordered US troops to shut down a newspaper run by supporters of Muqtada al-Sadr. The militant Shiite cleric has been preaching that Americans are behind the attacks on Iraqi civilians and condemning the interim constitution as a "terrorist law." So far, al-Sadr has refrained from calling on his supporters to join the armed resistance, but many here are predicting that the closing down of the newspaper—a nonviolent means of resisting the occupation—was just the push he needed. But then, recruiting for the resistance has always been a specialty of the Presidential Envoy to Iraq: Bremer's first act after being tapped by Bush was to fire 400,000 Iraqi soldiers, refuse to give them their rightful pensions but allow them to hold on to their weapons—in case they needed them later.

While US soldiers were padlocking the door of the newspaper's office, I found myself at what I thought would be an oasis of pro-Americanism, the Baghdad Soft Drinks Company. On May 1 this bottling plant will start producing one of the most powerful icons of American culture: Pepsi-Cola. I figured that if there was anyone left in Baghdad willing to defend the Americans, it would be Hamid Jassim Khamis, the Baghdad Soft Drinks Company's managing director. I was wrong.

"All the trouble in Iraq is because of Bremer," Khamis told me, flanked by a line-up of thirty Pepsi and 7-Up bottles. "He didn't listen to Iraqis. He doesn't know anything about Iraq. He destroyed the country and tried to rebuild it again, and now we are in chaos."

These are words you would expect to hear from religious extremists or Saddam loyalists, but hardly from the likes of Khamis. It's not just that his Pepsi deal is the highest-profile investment by a US multinational in Iraq's new "free market." It's also that few Iraqis supported the war more staunchly than Khamis. And no wonder: Saddam executed both of his brothers and Khamis was forced to resign as managing director of the bottling plant in 1999 after Saddam's son Uday threatened his life. When the Americans overthrew Saddam, "You can't imagine how much relief we felt," he says.

After the Baathist plant manager was forced out, Khamis returned to his old job. "There is a risk doing business with the Americans," he says. Several months ago, two detonators were discovered in front of the factory gates. And Khamis is still shaken from an attempted assassination three weeks ago. He was on his way to work when he was carjacked and shot at, and there was no doubt that this was a targeted attack; one of the assailants was heard asking another, "Did you kill the manager?"

Khamis used to be happy to defend his pro-US position, even if it meant arguing with friends. But one year after the invasion, many of his neighbors in the industrial park have gone out of business. "I don't know what to say to my friends anymore," he says. "It's chaos."

His list of grievances against the occupation is long: corruption in the awarding of reconstruction contracts, the failure to stop the looting, the failure to secure Iraq's borders—both from foreign terrorists and from unregulated foreign imports. Iraqi companies, still suffering from the sanctions and the looting, have been unable to compete.

Most of all, Khamis is worried about how these policies have fed the country's unemployment crisis, creating far too many desperate people. He also notes that Iraqi police officers are paid less than half what he pays his assembly line workers, "which is not enough to survive." The normally soft-spoken Khamis becomes enraged when talking about the man in charge of "rebuilding" Iraq. "Paul Bremer has caused more damage than the war, because the bombs can damage a building but if you damage people there is no hope."

I have gone to the mosques and street demonstrations and lis-

(Continued on Page 24)

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ARTICLES

BUSH TO CITY: DROP DEAD

by JACK NEWFIELD

The Bush Administration has treated New York City like a battered wife who still gets displayed for photo-ops and state dinners. George Bush and the Republicans who control both houses of Congress have starved New York for three years with fiscal policies that alternate between abuse and neglect. But now Bush will stage his renomination convention in the city he has used and abused—sticking his finger in our eye and exploiting our bereavement. This August, Karl Rove, the kitschy guru of political theater, will try to convert the crematorium of Ground Zero into a re-election billboard.

One of Bush's first TV ads of the season was another example of his exploitation of New York. It contained footage of New York firefighters carrying the remains of a dead co-worker on a gurney draped with an American flag. The image was an icon of the carnage. Scores of 9/11 widows and firefighters condemned the ad's poor taste and hypocrisy. As Jimmy Breslin wrote in *Newsday*, "In his first campaign commercial, George Bush reached down and molested the dead."

There are many ways in which the Bush Administration has attempted to strangle New York. The most telling has to do with its treatment of the city after the September 11 attacks. But there are others that show the extent of Bush's contempt not just for New York but, by implication, all of urban America.

In the first round of homeland security funding, in 2003, New York—twice targeted by terrorists, in 1993 and 2001—received 25 percent of the total of $500 million, which was divided among seven cities. In the 2003 supplemental budget, New York's share had shrunk to 18 percent, and the money was split among thirty cities. By last November, when New York City Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly said in testimony before Congress that New York was being shortchanged, the city's share had dwindled to less than 7 percent, and the money was divided among fifty localities.

The most at-risk city in America had been cut by two-thirds. Homeland security money has become another run-of-the-mill pork-barrel patronage operation, like highways. Kelly says, "The credible threat of terrorism is considered a secondary factor in Washington in the way homeland security funding is allocated."

In February Bush proposed an increase to $1.4 billion in homeland security funding for so-called "high-risk cities." But fifty cities are still designated as high risk, so New York's share is only $94 million—a fraction of what is needed. On a per capita basis, New York State ranks forty-ninth among the states in antiterrorist funding, far below rural, sparsely populated Wyoming, Montana and North Dakota. According to the New York *Daily News*, New York is also forty-ninth in per capita funding among cities: $5.87 per person. Compare that with $35.80 for Pittsburgh. But then, Tom Ridge was governor of Pennsylvania. Or look at Florida, where Jeb Bush is governor. Miami gets $52.82 per person. Orlando gets $47.14—as if Disney World is a bigger terrorist target than the New York subway system, the United Nations, the Stock Exchange, Times Square, JFK Airport, Yankee Stadium on opening day, or our reservoirs and water system. What's the biggest recipient of any US city, at $77.92 per person? New Haven, Connecticut. Is Yale a high-priority target because both Bushes are alumni?

Or consider the Bush Administration's treatment of first responders. It has recently eliminated its only program providing funds for upgrading police and fire department radio communications. On 9/11 the FDNY's

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radios did not function. Warnings over police radios to evacuate the towers immediately were not received by the firefighters trying to rescue trapped office workers. On that one day, 343 New York City firefighters died, and about 120 of these deaths have been attributed to the futile radio transmissions.

Since this catastrophe, New York's firefighters have emerged as international symbols of bravery, suffering and grief. Tourists still visit firehouses to offer condolences and leave flowers. George Bush famously embraced a firefighter on his visit to Ground Zero right after the attack. Bush has displayed members of the FDNY in the gallery at his speeches, wrapping himself in the glory of first responders.

But now, his Homeland Security Department has killed a federal program to integrate police and fire communications systems; New York will lose $6 million. Bush and Ridge have announced a $200 million cut in similar programs for next year, and a cut of 33 percent in the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program.

The FDNY has requested $250 million from the Bush Administration for the next three years for antiterrorist equipment and technology. The NYPD has requested $261 million. But according to NYPD testimony last November, the city has received less than $60 million so far—for all first-responder agencies. Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta says, "We definitely need more federal funding to be adequately prepared for bioterrorism, dirty bombs and radioactivity. We need equipment and training for these new horrors."

The FDNY has only one dedicated hazardous materials unit for the entire city of 8 million. Meanwhile, the fire department in Zanesville, Ohio (population 25,600), has federally funded thermal imaging technology to find victims in dense smoke and a test kit for lethal nerve gases. The FDNY is still asking for radios that work in a crisis.

New York's Congressional delegation is now trying to pass legislation to limit to fifteen the number of cities that qualify for homeland security funding. This seems the only way New York will get its fair share.

Before I get to how Bush screwed New York on healthcare, education and housing, let me emphasize: *All* American cities are getting shortchanged and stiffed. Bush is not just targeting New York; he has no urban policy at all. And make no mistake—New Yorkers are the crash-test dummies; if we survive a crushing budget cut or the elimination of a program, then it is replicated throughout the country.

Every American city began to suffer when the federal government stopped building housing for low- and moderate-income people while Ronald Reagan was President. San Francisco suffers from transportation funding formulas that favor highway construction over subways. Denver, Phoenix and Los Angeles suffer from pro-polluter environmental policies. And all cities, all poor people and most middle-class families have been damaged by the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy. These tax cuts are the invisible hand driving all budget decisions. They give Bush an excuse for underfunding VA hospitals, Pell Grants for higher education, school lunches, job training and adult literacy. This is what New York Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan called "starving the beast"—depleting the federal treasury, because the right wing thinks of the federal government as an enemy beast. The deficit is the politically salable excuse for miserliness.

The tax cuts for the rich rob the treasury of the money all cities need to address what John Edwards called the afflictions of "two Americas"—two public school systems, two healthcare systems, two tax systems. Because New York has such a disproportionate concentration of poor people, we are more vulnerable to Bush's neglect. New York City has nearly 1.7 million people living in poverty. Thirty percent of children are living in poverty, compared with 16.5 percent nationwide. New York has 966,000 residents on food stamps. A February study by the 156-year-old Community Service Society revealed that in 2003 only 51.8 percent of black men in the city between the ages of 16 and 64 were employed.

New Yorkers are the crash-test dummies; if we survive a budget cut or program elimination, then it is replicated throughout the country.

But as far as the Bush White House is concerned, every dollar spent on the poor is one less dollar for the deserving rich. In *The Price of Loyalty*, Ron Suskind quotes Vice President Dick Cheney's rationale in 2002 for more tax cuts: "We won the midterms. This is our due."

One example of Bush's contempt for New York, and all urban areas, is the latest Medicare bill. Passed by the House last November only after the usual fifteen-minute roll-call period had been stretched to almost three hours to allow GOP leaders to whip several members of their party into line, the bill is especially damaging to New York, where poor people depend on teaching hospitals for care. The law's funding formulas give preferential treatment to rural hospitals and to states with less dense population patterns.

New York State will receive only $480 million from 2004 to 2013, with only $80 million of that going to New York City. In contrast, Texas, home of House majority leader Tom DeLay, will get $1.1 billion, Alabama $738 million, Louisiana $554 million, Tennessee $655 million, North Carolina $576 million and Florida $741 million.

New York City not only has the biggest population in need in the country, and the highest cost of healthcare, but also the most hospitals in economic distress—forty-five. Dozens of cash-starved New York hospitals are now in jeopardy of closing.

One reason for the inequities was that Harlem's Charles Rangel, New York's senior Representative, was excluded from the key House-Senate conference that engaged in the final bargaining. "The conference was run like a private club that would not let me in," Rangel said. Ted Kennedy, the Senate's leading expert on healthcare, was also exiled from the conference. The only two Senate Democrats in the conference were John Breaux of Louisiana and Max Baucus of Montana, both of whom supported Bush on the bill.

Hospital administrators say that New York City should have gotten at least $400 million more if need, cost and population had been fairly taken into account. The bill made a 15 percent cut in

Jack Newfield, a veteran New York political reporter, is a senior fellow at the Nation Institute. His latest book is American Rebels *(Nation Books).*

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payments to teaching hospitals, which are concentrated in New York City. In practice, this is a 15 percent cut in healthcare services for the poor and elderly, who depend on Medicare.

On top of this targeted shot at New York, the Medicare bill also did nothing to lower the cost of prescription drugs, made it harder for citizens to purchase American-made drugs at lower prices in Canada, included a drug benefit that does not cover the middle class and postponed implementation of the new prescription drug program until 2006.

George Bush's education initiative, No Child Left Behind, exists in the same parallel universe as his Medicare bill. It is a PR scam that actually makes things worse, and disproportionately injures New York. NCLB created higher standards and rigorous testing, and imposes sanctions on those schools that don't improve. But given all the city's problems, New York's schools cannot meet these new federal mandates without the funds they were promised when Bush signed the law. Bush underfunded NCLB by $8 billion in 2003 and 2004—that is, the money was authorized by Congress but never allocated by Bush.

'[There is] a law of the jungle where some things don't survive. Maybe New York shouldn't survive.'—Richard Nixon, in 1972

New York City is the biggest recipient of Title I funds in the country—Title I being the largest federal program put under the NCLB umbrella—with 900 out of 1,200 schools eligible. New York City schools were deprived of $1.2 billion by Bush's miserly manipulations. A study released by New York City Representative Anthony Weiner showed that Title I schools in New York City lost $657 million, disabled pupils lost $513 million and teacher-training programs lost $39 million. There was $17.5 million less for computers in poor communities, and $12 million for programs that include school nurses and counselors.

The combination of tougher standards without adequate funding just sets up poor kids to feel the stigma of failure at an early age. And New York City has more poor kids, more dropouts, lower graduation rates, lower reading scores, more violence and larger class sizes than anywhere else.

On top of all this, New York's highest court has ruled that the Republican state administration of George Pataki has been shortchanging the city's schools for years: New York City has 37 percent of the state's students, but gets nowhere near what it should, relative to its needs. (The court ruled that the state must adjust its funding formulas.)

Randi Weingarten, president of New York's United Federation of Teachers union, calls Bush's underfunding of NCLB "devastating for New York's students and teachers."

Bush's proposed budget for 2005 does add (at least on paper) about $1 billion for the poorest schools. But at the same time, in a bit of fiscal flim-flam, his budget cuts or eliminates dozens of other education programs that help all cities. Among the programs being cut are those for drug treatment, guidance counselors, childcare, dropout prevention, increased parental involvement in low-income communities and a national writing project.

Bush is still leaving most poor children behind—while his Education Secretary, Rod Paige, called the nation's largest teachers union "a terrorist organization."

Buried in Bush's $2.4 trillion budget for 2005 is another battering blow: The budget provides $2 billion less than the Congressional Budget Office estimates is needed to fund Section 8 housing vouchers for the 2 million impoverished, elderly or disabled people already enrolled in this rent-subsidy program nationally. With 80,000 New Yorkers now in the Section 8 program, this means up to 10,000 New York families are now in jeopardy of losing their vouchers and their homes.

There are an additional 130,000 applicants in New York on the waiting list for Section 8 housing vouchers—but this waiting list has been closed to most new applicants since December 1994, because the demand is so overwhelming in a city with a permanent shortage of affordable housing. The voucher program provides a rent subsidy averaging $6,500 a year to families generally earning less than $20,000 a year (the vouchers pay the difference between the market rent of an apartment and 30 percent of a household's income). This cut will annul hope for everyone on the waiting list.

If the Bush budget proposal is approved, this will be the first time in the thirty-one-year history of the HUD-administered voucher program that the number of vouchers would be reduced. Bush tried to cut voucher funding last year, but the money was restored at the last minute by Congress in an omnibus appropriations bill. That cut would have forced 6,100 New Yorkers out of the program, and into almost certain homelessness and destitution.

New York City already has a famine of affordable housing, with rents rising faster than wages and 39,000 homeless people in city shelters, including 16,300 children. Evictions are up. Families are living doubled and tripled up. In Chinatown, I have interviewed immigrants who are renting a bed because they can't afford a room.

It's not possible to know with certainty why Bush and his team have treated New York so unfairly, or what Bush says about us in private with the Rev. Jerry Falwell, Tom DeLay, Karl Rove and Dick Cheney. The Bush team's economic, cultural, political and regional biases surely work against us. I suspect, but can't prove, that they want to punish us because so many New Yorkers are Democrats, union members, immigrants, blacks, Latinos, gays, war critics, civil libertarians, feminists, Jews, artists and bohemians. All I know is that we have been their policy piñata.

We *do* know what another modern Republican President really felt about New York—because it is preserved on tape. The darkest expression of right-wing nativism can be heard coming out of the mouth of Richard Nixon, on a Watergate tape recorded in 1972 and made public in December of 2003. Sounding like John Rocker on steroids, Nixon exclaims, "God damn New York." Then he whines that New York is filled with "Jews, and Catholics, and blacks and Puerto Ricans." He said there is "a law of the jungle where some things don't survive. Maybe New York shouldn't survive. Maybe it should go through a cycle of destruction."

The irony is that even Richard Nixon—after he vented—treated New York more equitably in his policies and priorities than George Bush has. ■

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TO ARMS, FREETHINKERS! RELIGIOUS ZEALOTS HAVE HIJACKED YOUR GOVERNMENT!

In Praise of Secularism

SUSAN JACOBY

It is no secret that the Bush Administration is engaged in the most radical assault on the separation of church and state in American history. The apostles of religious correctness never hesitate to broadcast their contempt for the Republic's secular laws and traditions—whether that means committing the federal government to uphold the "sanctity of marriage," as the President did in his State of the Union address, or stocking Grand Canyon National Park's bookstore with fundamentalist tracts claiming that the awe-inspiring canyon was created in six days.

It is equally evident that most Democrats are too terrified of being seen as antireligious to acknowledge that the very survival of America's secular government may be at stake in the 2004 election. Howard Dean's sudden discovery of the value of daily prayer, after being tarred with the dreaded S-word early in the primary season, exemplified the spinelessness of politicians (and others in public life) who fear identification with secularism, nonreligious humanism, even liberal religion—everything once encompassed by the lovely, evocative term freethinking.

Timid twenty-first-century secularists—in sharp contrast to the bold proselytizing freethinkers of the late nineteenth century—are missing a chance that may never come again if the Republicans have four more years to appoint federal judges who share their scorn for secular government.

The campaign offers the perfect opportunity to re-educate Americans about a heritage that has been denigrated not only by relentless attacks from the religious right but also by the failure of public schools to foster awareness of the nation's secular roots, embedded in a Constitution that omits any mention of God and instead assigns supreme power to "We the People."

Right-wing religion, money and political clout have driven the rise of religious correctness during the past thirty years, but an equally important factor is the larger American public's unexamined assumption that religion per se always exerts a benign influence on society. The ultraconservative minority has exploited that assumption brilliantly and succeeded in tarring opponents of faith-based adventurism as enemies of all religion, as atheists, as "relativists."

It takes a drastic example of religion's potential to do either public or private harm—say, a Christian Scientist's denial of a blood transfusion to his dying child or the transformation of a plane into a lethal weapon in the name of radical Islam—to shake the American faith in religion as a positive social force. Indeed, religious correctness demanded that Bush deny any connection between the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and "real" Islam. Yet there is a very real connection—however twisted it may seem to moderate and liberal religious believers—between fundamentalism and extremism in Christianity and Judaism as well as Islam.

The problem, of course, is not religion as a spiritual force but religion melded with political ideology and political power. Since the religiously correct do not acknowledge any danger in mixing religion and politics, evil acts committed in the name of religion must always be dismissed as the dementia of criminals and psychopaths.

What America lacks today is a public figure who talks about the danger of religious interference with government in the uncompromising terms used by Robert Green Ingersoll, the foremost freethinker and the most famous orator in late-nineteenth-century America, though he is scarcely mentioned in standard history texts today. Ingersoll, who was known as "the Great Agnostic," declared that the founders "knew that to put God into the Constitution was to put man out.... They knew the terrible history of the church too well to place in her keeping, or in the keeping of her God, the sacred rights of man."

Today's embattled secularists have failed to tap into a reservoir of respect for separation of church and state that stubbornly persists in spite of the pious drumbeat in the public square. A 2001

Copyright © 2004 by Susan Jacoby. This article is adapted from her recently published Freethinkers: A History of American Secularism *(Metropolitan). The author is also director of the Center for Inquiry–Metro New York, a secularist think tank.*

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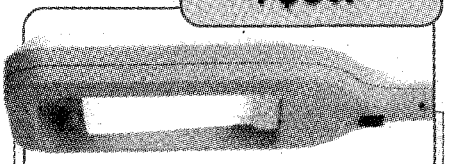

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"Can Independent Publishing Survive?"
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4 pm, Ackerman Grand Ballroom
"High Noon: Can America Go It Alone?"
A Festival panel with ***T. D. Allman*** *&* ***Nicholas von Hoffman***

SUNDAY, APRIL 25

10:00 am, Young Hall CS50
"Creative Nonfiction II: How I Got the Story"
A Festival panel with ***Jon Wiener***

11:30 am, Korn Convocation Hall
"Commerce and Aesthetics in the Making of America's Culture"
A Festival panel with ***Marc Cooper***

12:30 pm, Korn Convocation Hall
"Critics and Crusaders: The Future of Dissent"
A Festival panel with ***Katrina vanden Heuvel***

poll by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life revealed an astonishing disconnect between Americans' general approval of faith-based funding and their deep reservations about what specific churches might actually do with government money. While 71 percent endorsed tax support for faith-based social services, 78 percent would exclude religious organizations that hire only members of their own faith. There is no reason to believe that this overwhelming public sentiment has changed, yet Bush has pushed ahead with executive orders allowing church groups to qualify as public contractors—even if they refuse to hire workers of other religions. One reason the President may feel free to disregard public opinion is the near-total absence of press coverage highlighting the kinds of reservations expressed in the Pew poll.

The most striking finding was that nearly 60 percent of Americans oppose any tax funding for groups that encourage religious conversions. That is significant, because Judaism is the only faith among America's major religions that does not have a proselytizing tradition. Christian evangelicals, the staunchest supporters of faith-based funding, are also the most ardent seekers of converts.

Indeed, the public's fears about religious proselytizing have already been borne out in at least one fundamentalist Christian program for prisoners, operating in four states under the auspices of a foundation headed by Charles Colson, the convicted Watergate felon. Last year, Americans United for Separation of Church and State sued to halt the federally funded "Christ-centered" program, which offers prisoners privileges that include access to big-screen televisions and computers in return for a hefty dose of Bible study and "Christian counseling."

Finally, the poll results underline the most obvious peril inherent not only in government subsidies for social services but also in tax vouchers for parents sending their children to religious schools. On what basis do we decide which religions—and which factions within religions—are "moderate" enough to be eligible for tax money? That is precisely the question that the framers of the Constitution never wanted to fall under the authority of any government agency or official.

The Pew poll showed that Americans want to limit tax funding to the Big Three—Protestantism, Judaism and Catholicism. About 60 percent said synagogues and mainstream (whatever that means) Protestant and Catholic churches should be able to apply for government money, but only 38 percent would allow grants for Muslim institutions (and the poll was taken before 9/11).

Americans' qualms when presented with specific questions about faith-based funding—as distinct from a general question that never discusses exactly which religions will get the money and for what purpose—suggest that many would respond positively to an honest discussion of the issue. But for that to happen, secularists must first stop pussyfooting around the larger issue of the harm that religion is capable of doing.

In "Kicking the Secularist Habit," a peculiar essay in the March 2003 *Atlantic*, the conservative writer David Brooks (now an op-ed columnist for the *New York Times*) admitted to having discovered the astonishing fact, in the wake of 9/11, that humans "yearn for righteous rule, for a just world or a world that reflects God's will—in many cases at least as strongly as they yearn for money or success." The crucial questions, Brooks argued, are, "Do individuals pursue a moral vision of righteous rule? And do

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they do so in virtuous ways, or are they, like Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden, evil in their visions and methods?"

Fanatics throughout history have always been convinced of the virtuousness of their visions. The crucial issue is not whether individuals pursue a "vision of righteous rule" but whether the melding of religion and government, or religion and a transnational terrorist movement in the case of bin Laden, enables fanatics to pursue their particular religious/political vision with devastating consequences for those who do not share it. If bin Laden did not have financial support from radical Islamists dedicated to extending the sweep of their theocracies, the morality or immorality of his personal vision would be of little consequence: He would be just another aggrieved prophet crying in the wilderness.

It is precisely because secularists do understand the power of religion, and the possibility that any intensely felt drive for righteousness may overwhelm dissenters in its path, that they insist on the fundamental importance of separation between church and state. Bin Laden is an easy case; the hard cases, which the Constitution was designed to prevent, involve political decisions in which both virtue and evil may be in the eye of the beholder. There is no doubt that Bush, in many areas of foreign and domestic policy, is pursuing his vision of righteous rule in a fashion compatible with his religion-based morality—but he is pursuing it through a government that represents millions of Americans who do not share his religion or his personal idea of righteousness.

To reclaim their proper place in the public square, secular humanists must reclaim the language of passion and emotion.

It is not enough for secularists to speak up in defense of the godless Constitution; they must also defend the Enlightenment values that produced the legal structure crafted by the framers. Important as separation of church and state is to American secularists, their case must be made on a broader plane that transcends politics and rises to the defense of rational thought itself.

The great nineteenth-century freethinkers, heirs of the Enlightenment, are often mocked today for their faith in human progress and for their predictions that a secular religion combining humanism and scientific rationalism would soon replace the orthodox creeds of the day. Men like Ingersoll were certainly wrong in their predictions of the imminent demise of religion—even in its most retrograde and cruel forms—but whether they were wrong under the long arc of the moral universe remains to be seen.

The need for a strong secularist defense of science is especially urgent, because many of the religious right's policy goals are intimately linked to a profound distrust of science and scientists. There is a strong connection between the revival of anti-evolutionism since 1980 and the attack on separation of church and state, because the Christianization of secular public education has long been a goal of the forces of conservative religion.

There is also a link between the antievolution campaign and the general decline of American scientific literacy. During the past two decades, study after study has documented the declining knowledge of basic scientific facts among American public school students and their teachers. This ignorance is generally attributed to lax American education standards, and there is of course a great deal of truth in the charge. But fundamentalist, antimodernist religion has also been a significant player in the dumbing down of the elementary and secondary school science curriculum.

Just as the word "evolution" was removed from most high school textbooks after the Scopes trial in the mid-1920s, many biology teachers in the 1990s began to use the less inflammatory (to fundamentalists) word "development." The obfuscation of scientific terminology to placate the religiously correct cannot help but undermine Americans' general ability to make crucial distinctions between scientific fact and theological opinion.

The attack on science is a prime issue for secularists not because religion and science are necessarily incompatible but because particular forms of religious belief—those that claim to have found the one true answer to the origins and ultimate purpose of human life—are incompatible not only with science but with democracy. Those who rely on divine instructions for political guidance, whether on biomedical research or capital punishment, are really saying that such issues can never be a matter of imperfect human opinion. If the hand of the Almighty explains and rules the workings of nature, it can hardly fail to rule the workings of the American political system.

The fact that an overwhelming majority of Americans believe in God and (in much smaller numbers) regularly attend church does not mean that a defense of secular government and science will fall on deaf ears. Most Americans disapprove of the sacralization of government decisions on such matters as biomedical research and the right to die, for example.

The problem is that fundamentalists care more about religious issues than the rest of the public and do more to see that their views are heard. They have dominated public discourse and have trapped American secularists between two poles. On the one hand, secularists' importance is exaggerated by those who have swallowed the argument that the nonreligious have already won the day; on the other, secularists are attacked (sometimes by the same people) as enemies of majoritarian, by definition religious, American values.

The antisecularists cannot have it both ways. If secularists are in charge of everything, then America is not as religious as the religiously correct claim; if secularists are an insolent minority trying to erode the values of the majority, then they are not in charge of everything.

To reclaim their proper place in the public square, secular humanists must reclaim the language of passion and emotion from the religiously correct. No one is a more pedestrian orator in ordinary circumstances than Bush, but when, in the wake of the terrorist attacks, he drew on the words of the Apostle Paul to assure a grieving nation that "nothing can separate us from God's love," he gained stature not only from the gravity of the situation but from the passion and grace of the words written in that most emotional of books, the Bible.

Secularists frequently present themselves, and are perceived by others, as a cool lot, applying intellectual theories to social questions but out of tune with the emotions that move religious

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believers. Last summer, when federal courts ordered the removal of the hefty Ten Commandments monument from the Alabama State Supreme Court Building, thousands of Christian demonstrators converged on Montgomery. They were not only outraged but visibly grief-stricken when the monument was moved out of sight. It was, one demonstrator said with tears in his eyes, like a death in the family. In Montgomery, Christian demonstrators kissed their Bibles; for a secularist, kissing a copy of the Constitution would be a form of idolatry.

Today's secularists would do well to take a lesson from their freethinking nineteenth-century predecessors, who, with a combination of passion and rationalism, sought to change hearts as well as minds. In a speech (appropriately titled "A Lay Sermon") delivered before the American Secular Union in 1886, Ingersoll quoted "the best prayer I have ever read"—Lear's soliloquy when, after raging on the heath, he stumbles upon a place of shelter:

> Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
> That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
> How shall your unhoused heads and your unfed sides,
> Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
> From seasons such as these? Oh, I have ta'en
> Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;
> Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
> That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,
> And show the heavens more just.

This is the essence of the secularist and humanist faith, and it must be offered not as a defensive response to the religiously correct but as a robust and ardent creed worthy of the first secular government in the world. ■

ON THE EVE OF MASS PROTESTS, POLICE TELL TALES THAT TURN OUT NOT TO BE TRUE.

Lying in Wait

DAVID GRAEBER

It is a little-known fact that no one at an anti-globalization protest in the United States has ever thrown a Molotov cocktail. Nor is there reason to believe global justice activists have planted bombs, pelted cops with bags of excrement or ripped up sidewalks to pummel them with chunks of concrete, thrown acid in policemen's faces or shot at them with wrist-rockets or water pistols full of urine or bleach. Certainly, none have ever been arrested for doing so. Yet somehow, every time there is a major mobilization, police and government officials begin warning the public that this is exactly what they should expect. Every one of these claims was broached in discussions of the protests against the Summit of the Americas in Miami in November and used to justify extreme police tactics, and we can expect to be hearing them again in the months before the Republican convention protests in New York.

KAREN CALDICOTT

Such claims have an interesting history. They first emerged in the months immediately following the WTO protests in Seattle in November 1999, with a series of pre-emptive police strikes against activist threats that, much like Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, never quite materialized:

April 2000, Washington, DC. Hours before the protests against the IMF and World Bank are to begin, police seize the activists' Convergence Center. Chief Charles Ramsey loudly claims to have discovered a workshop there for manufacturing Molotov cocktails and homemade pepper spray. DC police later admit no such workshop existed (in reality, they'd found paint thinner used in art projects and peppers being used for the manufacture of gazpacho); however, the center remains closed, and much of the art, including the puppets, has been appropriated.

July 2000, Minneapolis. Days before a scheduled protest against the International Society of Animal Geneticists, local police claim that activists detonated a cyanide bomb at a local McDonald's and might have their hands on stolen explosives. The next day the Drug Enforcement Administration raids a house used by organizers, drags off the bloodied inhabitants and appropriates their computers and outreach materials. Police later admit there never was a cyanide bomb and they had no reason to believe activists were in possession of explosives.

August 2000, Philadelphia. Hours before protests against the Republican convention are to begin, police, claiming to be acting on a tip, seize the warehouse where art, banners and puppets are being prepared, arresting the seventy activists inside. Chief John Timoney announces the discovery of C4 explosives and water balloons full of hydrochloric acid. Police later admit that no explosives or acid were found; those arrested are not, however, released. All of the puppets, banners, art and literature to be used in the protest are destroyed.

While it is possible that we are dealing with a remarkable series of honest mistakes, this looks more like a series of attacks on the materials activists were intending to use to get their message out to the public. Certainly that's how the activists interpreted the raids. One of the big discussions before every new mobilization has now become where to hide the giant puppets. In Miami the City Council actually made the display of puppets illegal during the month of the summit—ostensibly because they

David Graeber is assistant professor of anthropology at Yale. His latest book is Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology *(Prickly Paradigm).*
The author would like to thank A.K. Gupta and the entire staff of The Indypendent *for their assistance with this article.*

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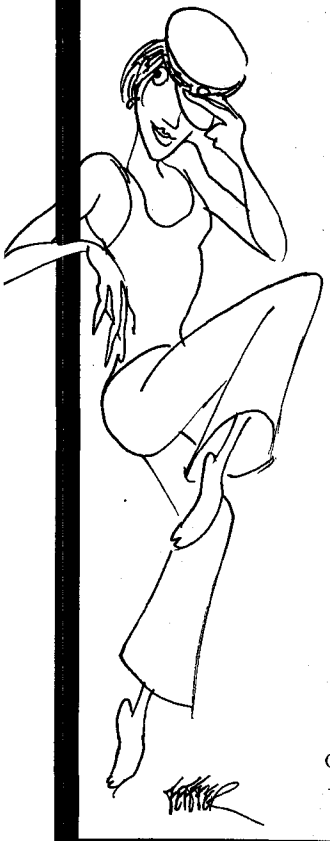

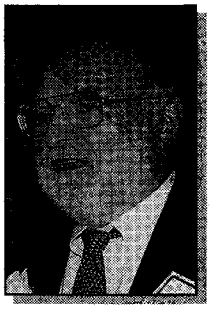

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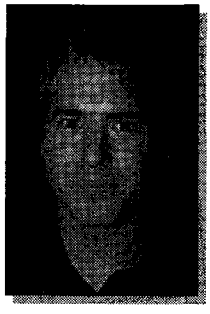

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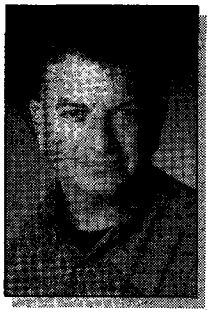

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Investigative Reporter for *The New York Times* and PBS's *Frontline*

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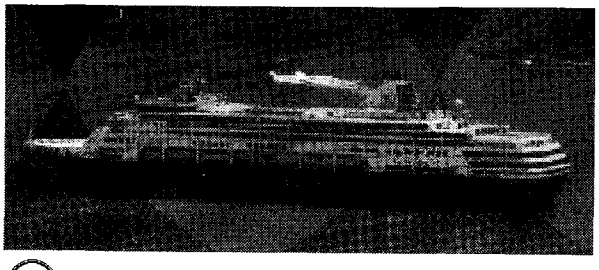
Dec. 9	Thu	Road Town, Tortola	7:00AM	4:00PM
Dec. 10	Fri	Day at Sea		
Dec. 11	Sat	Half Moon Cay, Bahamas	8:00AM	4:00PM
Dec. 12	Sun	Ft. Lauderdale, Florida	8:00AM	



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could be used to conceal weapons—and the police strategy consisted almost entirely of pre-emptive strikes against activists, hundreds of whom were swept up and charged with planning, but never quite actually performing, unspeakable acts.

The press, meanwhile, has been airing increasingly outlandish accounts of what happened at Seattle. During the WTO protests themselves, no one, including the police, claimed that anyone had done anything more militant than break a plate-glass window. Yet just three months later, the *Boston Herald* reported that officers from Seattle had come to brief the local police on how to deal with "Seattle tactics," such as attacking police with "chunks of concrete, BB guns, wrist rockets and large capacity squirt guns loaded with bleach and urine." When a few months later *New York Times* reporter Nichole Christian, apparently relying on police sources in Detroit, claimed that Seattle demonstrators had "hurled Molotov cocktails, rocks and excrement at delegates and police officers," the *Times* had to run a retraction, admitting that Seattle authorities confirmed no objects had been thrown at human beings. Yet somehow the exact same claims continue to resurface. Before the Miami protests, for example, circulars distributed to local businessmen and civic groups, attributed to "police intelligence" sources, listed every one of these "Seattle tactics" as what should be expected, insuring that when the protests began, most of downtown Miami lay shuttered and abandoned.

Some police officials have become notorious among activists for their Gothic imaginations. Timoney, the former Philadelphia police chief who took over Miami's department before last fall's protests, is fond of peppering his press conferences with stories of activists caught planning to release poisonous snakes and reptiles among the citizenry, officers hospitalized because of acid attacks and activists assaulting his troops with a variety of bodily fluids. Such charges invariably make splashy headlines at the time, only to be later exposed as false or fade away for lack of evidence. Timoney has also become notorious for brutal tactics: In Miami his men opened fire on activists with an array of wooden, rubber and plastic bullets, tazer guns, concussion grenades and a variety of chemical weapons. Despite calls from groups ranging from the United Steelworkers to Amnesty International for an investigation, Timoney has already been put in charge of security for this summer's Democratic National Convention in Boston.

Probably one of the police's purposes is simply to rally the troops. As commanders discovered in Seattle, police often feel a little uncomfortable about orders to conduct a baton charge against a group of unarmed 16-year-old girls. A deeper reason, though, may have been a perceived need to address a crisis in public perception. To the frustration of high-level officials who were finding their meetings regularly ruined by acts of civil disobedience, the American public largely refused to see the global justice movement as a menace to society. True, the media tried to create hysteria over a few broken windows, but to surprisingly little effect. The question then became, What would it take to cast protesters in the role of the villain? The answer appears to have been a calculated campaign of symbolic warfare: Remove the images of colorful floats and puppets; replace them with images of bombs and hydrochloric acid. And if it has worked—which seems to be the case, considering the public's relative indifference to police destruction of protest art and banners in Philadelphia, or to the extraordinary pre-emptive violence in Miami—it is because on matters of public security, it rarely occurs to most Americans that so many of the officials charged with protecting them could be intentionally, systematically lying. ■

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)
the senseless loss of life our government is promoting. *Then* we can talk about walking and running. KATE THOM FITZGERALD

Miami
■ *Et tu, Brute?* Shame on you, for even implying that Ralph Nader should not run. Your fears are ridiculous, and the very idea of shutting down a viable candidate with an important message is about as un-American as you can get. Don't lose the values that make progressive thinkers stay one step ahead of the pack. It's our morality and sense of right and wrong that guide us. America is not about ignorance, arrogance, treachery, hypocrisy and greed; it's about truth, justice, freedom and equality. MIKE TRACHTENBERG

Barrington, RI
■ If the Democrats lose because Nader runs, it will again be their own fault for being Republican-lite. While another four years of Bush is horrifying, sometimes it has to get worse before it can get better. Run, Ralph, Run!
DAVID HAWLA

Pelham, Mass.
■ Thank you for asking Ralph Nader not to run. As a progressive mother of a soldier serving in Iraq, nothing scares me more than seeing this next election lost—especially because of an idealistic, honorable person. I am disturbed beyond fear by the thought that Bush has a chance at another four years. LAURA STRANLUND

Carmel Valley, Calif.
■ It is sad indeed when Ralph Nader can't see the forest through the Bushes. Four more years of Bush will set back the nation—and all Nader's accomplishments. His decision to run for President again is a selfish and egotistical act and a huge disappointment to people who have had great respect for his work over the years.
LEWIS GOODKIN

Monroe, Me.
■ Imploring Ralph not to run, *The Nation* has once again demonstrated the power of liberal influence to change the course of history: zilch.
GREG BATES, *publisher, Common Courage Press*

THE TRUE PATRIOTS, LARGE & SMALL

Jerome, Ariz.
■ It's not just large cities passing resolutions denouncing the Patriot Act but also some of the smallest ["In Fact," March 8]. Last year Jerome, Arizona (pop. 450), passed one. We're all in this together. MARY "MIMI" CURRIER

CORRECTIONS

■ Because of a communication failure and editorial and fact-checking slips, several errors appeared in Elisabeth Sifton's "The Battle Over the Pledge" (April 5). Michael Newdow was the *pro se* appellee (not defendant) when his case was heard at the federal appeals level, and Justice Jackson wrote the opinion in the 1943 *Barnette* case for a 6-to-3 majority, not 8-to-1. Also, the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention and the National Association of Evangelicals did not, in the end, file amicus briefs supporting the Elk Grove school district in the *Newdow* case heard on March 24. Our apologies to the author.

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COMMENT

(Continued From Page 6)

reverse. If only we could assume the best, in a sort of USAID-induced hallucinatory fantasy: that the Americans would be wise trustees, that Haitian technocrats would be elected in free balloting and run the country honestly, that the occupation would remain only long enough to build roads and bridges and clinics and schools. But this, unfortunately, is not what recent events foretell.

AMY WILENTZ

Amy Wilentz is the author of The Rainy Season: Haiti Since Duvalier *(Touchstone) and of the novel* Martyrs' Crossing *(Ballantine).*

Scalia's Flawed Judgment

After weeks of critical editorials, embarrassing cartoons and late-night talk-show jokes, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia issued a twenty-one-page memorandum on March 18 to explain why his January duck-hunting trip with Vice President Cheney, and his free ride to Louisiana on Cheney's plane, do not disqualify him from hearing Cheney's appeal of a case that could affect the Vice President's political future. The harm from this unpersuasive conclusion extends beyond this one case. Scalia's opinion tells thousands of federal and state judges that it can be OK to vacation with friends who have cases before them and to accept the generosity of those friends while their cases are pending. Though nothing can now undo Scalia's decision to sit in Cheney's case, it is not too soon to adopt remedies that will restore confidence to the credibility of recusal rulings.

Nine days after taking office, George W. Bush asked a study group to propose a national energy policy and named Cheney to head it. Operating in secret, the group made recommendations, which the President accepted. The Sierra Club and Judicial Watch sued Cheney and others to release the group's records so they could learn the extent of energy industry influence. Unable to get the case dismissed in lower courts, Cheney went to the Supreme Court, which took the appeal December 15. Twenty-one days later, Scalia and Cheney went on their long-planned hunting trip. Accompanied by Scalia's son and son-in-law, they flew on the Vice President's plane to Louisiana, where nine other hunters joined them. Cheney stayed two days. Scalia's group stayed longer and flew home commercially. The Sierra Club (but not Judicial Watch) asked Scalia to recuse himself, citing a thirty-year-old federal law that mandates recusal of any federal judge whose "impartiality might reasonably be questioned."

Scalia's opinion refusing to step aside dismisses the plane flight to Louisiana, explaining that it saved him no money. He writes that in order to get home, he and his relatives had to buy round-trip tickets anyway. So financially the whole episode was a wash. But money is not the issue. Anyone lucky enough to get bumped to first class because an airline has overbooked coach knows that Cheney gave the Scalia group something of value. Scalia's opinion also claims that the appeal is not really about Cheney, who is sued only in his "official capacity," but about the power of the Vice President and the meaning of complex statutes. Ignored is the fact that rejection of the appeal can hurt Cheney politically in an election year if the secret records reveal a pro-industry bias in Cheney's leadership of the study group. That may also explain why Cheney stonewalled the nonpartisan General Accounting Office when it asked him for the same information.

An opposing argument could reveal these and other flaws in Scalia's logic and might well persuade a disinterested judge to reach a contrary conclusion. Judges have been disqualified for much less. But there will be no opposing argument or disinterested judge. Scalia is both the advocate and the judge here because Supreme Court Justices get final say on when the recusal law applies to them. Scalia's eight colleagues on the Court do have the power to review his decision, just as they have reviewed similar decisions of lower court judges. But it is a power they do not use.

A proverb tells us that no person should judge his or her own cause. Yet on this issue, at least, the Justices judge themselves. The best way to change that is to require that recusal motions get assigned to someone other than the subject. Copying the practice of some lower courts, the Supreme Court can refer recusal motions to another Justice or a panel of three Justices. And to encourage recusal, if warranted, we must also make it less disruptive of the Court's business. Justices often resist recusal by citing (as Scalia did here) the need to avoid a 4-4 division on the Court. An equally divided Court means the country loses the benefit of binding precedent after much time and energy. To meet that concern, Congress should copy a system some high state courts use: In the event a Justice is disqualified, one of the thirteen chief judges of the federal courts of appeals, chosen by lot, is authorized to fill in.

Of course, the best remedy would have avoided the problem entirely. Scalia should have canceled the trip when Cheney's case appeared on his docket back in September. But judging from the dismissive, often sarcastic tone of Scalia's opinion, that option was never considered.

STEPHEN GILLERS

Stephen Gillers is vice dean and professor of law at New York University School of Law.

A Union of Unions

There are bigger American unions, but none that are feistier organizers than HERE (hotel and restaurant workers) and UNITE (historically garment and textile workers). So when UNITE president Bruce Raynor and HERE president John Wilhelm announced plans in late February to merge their unions, it was not surprising that they said they intended to organize workers on a far grander scale together than they had separately. The merger could indeed spark much-needed growth of private-sector unions (down last year to representing 8.2 percent of the private work force), building on the growing tendency of unions to work in concert as they face tougher, more global employers. "Neither of these unions has to merge," Raynor said. "We're both unions with solid organizing programs, both well respected and secure. The question is: Are we bigger, better, stronger together? The answer is yes."

Over the past decade UNITE's core apparel and textile industries have lost 800,000 jobs, mainly to imports and relocation of

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work overseas. But the union has successfully organized industrial laundries and retail distribution centers and recently returned to its old base in retail stores (including an organizing drive at the cheap-chic Swedish firm, H&M). It's also a well-endowed union that even owns a $4 billion bank. On the other hand, HERE is a relatively poor union hurt by decline in the hospitality business—hotels, casinos, airports and food services—since 9/11. But most of its core jobs can't go overseas, even though the once decentralized industries are increasingly controlled by a few global, often foreign-owned, multinationals (for example, Aramark, Sodexho and Compass dominate the global food service industry and are expanding into other services). HERE organized vigorously until recently, but it has not had the resources to take full advantage of its opportunities, including many untapped agreements to keep hotel owners neutral during organizing drives.

Both unions disproportionately organize women, especially recent immigrants and people of color, to raise living standards in low-wage industries. Raynor and Wilhelm are both Ivy League graduates who came out of political movements of the 1960s and made their mark in organizing—Raynor in the South, Wilhelm in the West (mainly Las Vegas), so their unions enjoy complementary regional strengths. The merger will also permit grander projects by combining staff and drawing money from administrative savings and UNITE's regional bodies, which control half the union's financial resources. "The need for unions to have the size and scale necessary to challenge the globalized companies we face is great," Wilhelm said, "but I also think the need for unions that want to contribute to redefining the labor movement to work together grows bigger every day."

Last summer Wilhelm and Raynor were among the five union leaders, including the Laborers' Terry O'Sullivan, the Service Employees' Andy Stern and—odd man out—the Carpenters' John McCarron, who formed the New Unity Partnership. "The NUP core purpose is to find joint campaigns where people work together about growth," Stern said, adding that one target for the group could be real estate companies that affect conditions for construction, hotel and building service workers and also rely on investments from workers' pension funds, providing unions with leverage over them.

"The whole world has changed, and we're operating with structures created in 1955" when the AFL and CIO merged, Stern said. "If we don't change, we're going to fail workers and not maximize the limited strength we have." NUP leaders argue that labor should consolidate into ten to twenty big unions, instead of nearly seventy now, with clearly focused industrial strategies. After working together on HERE's contract fight with Yale this past fall, Raynor and Wilhelm began talking about a possible merger into a 440,000-member UNITE HERE, hoping to set an example for other unions. But Stern argues that cooperation in many forms is needed immediately and can't wait for mergers.

NUP isn't alone in talking about new alliances: Nineteen unions (including the Laborers) that formed the Alliance for Economic Justice and backed Dick Gephardt's presidential candidacy are exploring new ways to cooperate on organizing and political issues—especially jobs, healthcare and trade. Recently the Steelworkers and PACE (an earlier merger of paper and chemical workers), which had shared ideas on political and workplace-safety plans, announced a strategic alliance.

Unions are adapting internally as well: HERE has been negotiating local hotel contracts to move toward a common national expiration date that will provide clout with increasingly global chains. Many observers believe that the long strike by Southern California grocery workers this winter suffered its profound setback in part because workers were fighting regionally against powerful national employers.

These institutional realignments of unions are often interpreted as a challenge to the AFL-CIO, since some union leaders are frustrated that the federation has not done more to boost organizing. But at this point NUP is intended as a supplement, not an alternative, to the AFL-CIO. Stern argues that there's a need for a vast new range of vehicles in addition to the federation, including global alliances and joint bargaining groups, to bring together workers who face common employers or industries. "If you're going to have multiple unions, you should have a singular strategy," he said, arguing that workers in different unions—like the roughly fifteen unions representing drivers for Laidlaw, the nation's largest school bus contractor—should be able to vote on whether they all want to organize or bargain together.

Although American unions are weakened because they are so fragmented, mergers or industrial realignments alone are no cure. Whether they merge or find more varied ways to cooperate, unions need more focused and large-scale organizing, broader alliances, consistent progressive politics and greater involvement of members. Critics worry that the NUP may be too willing to compromise with centrist or conservative politicians or employers to boost organizing, and that it pushes centralization at the expense of union democracy. Indeed, one of union organizers' most powerful arguments with hesitant recruits is that the union is theirs, a message that is essential for organizing a better-educated work force. And as unions argue that workers deserve a greater voice at work and in society, they must also champion a voice for workers in their own unions—including in the development of new strategies like the NUP. In response to this concern, Stern points out that democracy should be "an ingredient, not a panacea," in a strategy for labor's future, adding that workers join unions to create the strength to win gains like healthcare, not for democratic processes as an end in themselves.

These issues will be dormant while labor is united in the fight against Bush, but with AFL-CIO president John Sweeney's term ending in 2005, there will be heated debate over not just the leadership of the AFL-CIO but also the structure and direction of the labor movement. Whether or not Wilhelm is a candidate for the federation presidency, the merger of UNITE HERE raises many key strategic issues for labor. "If we're going to keep any notion of a middle class alive in North America, it's got to be by making good jobs out of those service sector jobs that can't be moved," Wilhelm said. "At the same time we've got to engage in a serious way the struggle about what globalization is going to mean. So I think the merger of these two unions is extremely timely." So is the debate about labor's future. DAVID MOBERG

David Moberg is a senior editor at In These Times.

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COMMENT

Fighting for Oil—Still

Although media attention has been focused on civil violence in the Baghdad area, Iraq's vast and vulnerable network of oil pipelines and pumping stations has become a major battlefield in the ongoing struggle between the US authorities and armed opposition forces. The Americans are trying to boost Iraqi oil exports to finance the occupation and increase global petroleum supplies at a time of worrisome shortages; the resistance fighters are trying to sabotage the pipelines and thereby cripple the US-directed reconstruction effort. So significant is this struggle that Washington has resorted to two shameful initiatives: First, it reactivated a US Army reconnaissance unit accused of war crimes during the Vietnam War to hunt down and kill suspected saboteurs; second,it hired a South African security firm with ties to apartheid-era death squads to manage a pipeline-protection service.

Both of these efforts are part of a campaign known as Task Force Shield, intended to stop sabotage of the 300-mile pipeline carrying crude oil from fields near Kirkuk in northern Iraq to the Turkish border and thence to the Mediterranean port of Ceyhan. Before the war, 800,000 barrels of oil per day, or approximately 40 percent of Iraq's exports, flowed through this conduit. Exports were resumed after the war and then suspended in June due to continuing explosions and sabotage; some oil is now flowing through the recently repaired pipeline, but far less than before the war. With the Kirkuk-to-Ceyhan pipeline operating at very low levels, Iraqi petroleum officials have been forced to rely on the country's only other export outlets—the oil terminals at Mina al Bakr and Khawr al Amaya on the Persian Gulf—and these outlets are operating at maximum capacity. This means that any US effort to boost Iraqi exports beyond their current level of about 1.5 million barrels per day will require the permanent reopening of the Ceyhan line and round-the-clock protection against sabotage.

For pipeline protection the Defense Department reactivated a special unit of the 101st Airborne called the Tiger Force. Starting last October, the Tiger Force deployed five teams of ten snipers each along the remote stretches of the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline. Armed with night-vision scopes and high-powered, M-107 .50-calibre rifles, the snipers flew over the pipelines in specially configured UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and fired at suspected saboteurs from distances of more than 1.5 miles. "We can hit a target before it knows we're there," boasted Sgt. Brian Stinson of the special unit.

Aside from the questionable practice of shooting people before they can be identified, the deployment of the Tiger Force raises other ethical questions. In the Vietnam War the Tiger Force was used to hunt down and kill suspected guerrillas and their sympathizers in the fiercely contested Central Highlands region. In a series of recent articles in the *Toledo Blade*, former members of the Tiger Force admitted that they and their comrades had slaughtered more than 100 Vietnamese civilians in a series of mass killings in the second half of 1967. War crimes proceedings were initiated against eighteen members of the Tiger Force, then dropped [see Scott Sherman, "The Other My Lai," March 1].

None of the snipers currently serving in the Tiger Force were involved in the alleged Vietnam massacres, but the reactivation of this tainted unit for pipeline duty seems grotesque in view of the tactics it employs—cold-blooded assassination of suspected saboteurs. The Tiger Force was recently replaced in Iraq by elements of Task Force Olympia, but operations of this sort continue.

Similar questions are raised by the use of private security firms employing former South African police and military combatants to train Iraqi guards in pipeline-protection duties. This past August the Pentagon awarded a $39.5 million contract to Erinys International to hire and train 6,500 Iraqis to guard 140 oil installations in northern Iraq. Erinys, a shadowy company that has been in business for just a few years, boasts of contracts with such well-connected firms as Bechtel, Halliburton, Fluor and De Beers Consolidated Mines.

The Erinys contract first aroused controversy last fall, when it was disclosed that its major investors included figures close to Ahmad Chalabi, founder of the Iraqi National Congress and member of the Iraq Governing Council. Other council members, including Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi National Accord, charged that Chalabi was using his position on the IGC to funnel lucrative contracts to his cronies in the INC at the expense of national unity.

A more serious problem arose in January when a South African security specialist was killed and four co-workers wounded in a bomb blast at the Shaheen Hotel in Baghdad. Coverage of the event in South Africa revealed that all four were working for an Erinys subcontractor, SAS International, and had all served in South Africa's apartheid-era security forces. François Strydom, the specialist who died in the explosion, was identified as a former member of the Koevoet, a brutal counterinsurgency unit of the South African Defense Force used to quash independence forces in Namibia during the independence struggle of the 1980s. One of the blast's survivors, Deon Gouws, is said to be a former Pretoria police sergeant who collaborated with the notorious Vlakplaas death squads and admitted to numerous crimes as part of an amnesty application submitted to South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Among the actions for which Gouws ultimately received amnesty was a 1986 car bombing that killed KwaNdebele homeland cabinet minister Piet Ntuli. The *Cape Argus* of Cape Town subsequently reported that those involved in the Baghdad explosion were believed to be under investigation by South Africa's National Prosecuting Authority for violations of the country's laws banning mercenary activities—defined as "direct participation as a combatant in armed conflict for private gain" by South Africa's Regulation of Foreign Military Assistance Act. Critics say Erinys has yet to register with the country's National Conventional Arms Control Committee, as required by law.

That US troops continue to protect Iraq's oil infrastructure and that the Defense Department has hired South African mercenaries to assist in this function is yet another piece of evidence—if any more were needed—to demonstrate that oil was, and remains, a critical factor in the Bush Administration's decision to occupy Iraq.

MICHAEL T. KLARE

Michael T. Klare, Nation *defense correspondent, is professor of peace and world security studies at Hampshire College. He is the author of the forthcoming* Blood and Oil *(Metropolitan).*

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LOOKOUT
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 10)

tened to Muqtada al-Sadr's supporters shout "Death to America, Death to the Jews," and it is indeed chilling. But it is the profound sense of betrayal expressed by a pro-US businessman running a Pepsi plant that attests to the depths of the US-created disaster here. "I'm disappointed, not because I hate the Americans," Khamis tells me, "but because I like them. And when you love someone and they hurt you, it hurts even more."

When we leave the bottling plant in late afternoon, the streets of US-occupied Baghdad are filled with al-Sadr supporters vowing bloody revenge for the attack on their newspaper. A spokesperson for Bremer is defending the decision on the grounds that the paper "was making people think we were out to get them."

A growing number of Iraqis are certainly under that impression, but it has far less to do with an inflammatory newspaper than with the inflammatory actions of the US occupation authority. As the June 30 "handover" approaches, Paul Bremer has unveiled a slew of new tricks to hold on to power long after "sovereignty" has been declared.

Some recent highlights: At the end of March, building on his Order 39 of last September, Bremer passed yet another law further opening up Iraq's economy to foreign ownership, a law that Iraq's next government is prohibited from changing under the terms of the interim constitution. Bremer also announced the establishment of several independent regulators, which will drastically reduce the power of Iraqi government ministries. For instance, the *Financial Times* reports that "officials of the Coalition Provisional Authority said the regulator would prevent communications minister Haider al-Abadi, a thorn in the side of the coalition, from carrying out his threat to cancel licenses the coalition awarded to foreign-managed consortia to operate three mobile networks and the national broadcaster."

The CPA has also confirmed that after June 30, the $18.4 billion the US government is spending on reconstruction will be administered by the US Embassy in Iraq. The money will be spent over five years and will fundamentally redesign Iraq's most basic infrastructure, including its electricity, water, oil and communications sectors, as well as its courts and police. Iraq's future governments will have no say in the construction of these core sectors of Iraqi society. Retired Rear Adm. David Nash, who heads the Project Management Office, which administers the funds, describes the $18.4 billion as "a gift from the American people to the people of Iraq." He appears to have forgotten the part about gifts being something you actually give up. And in the same eventful week, US engineers began construction on fourteen "enduring bases" in Iraq, capable of housing the 110,000 soldiers who will be posted here for at least two more years. Even though the bases are being built with no mandate from an Iraqi government, Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt, deputy chief of operations in Iraq, called them "a blueprint for how we could operate in the Middle East."

The US occupation authority has also found a sneaky way to maintain control over Iraq's armed forces. Bremer has issued an executive order stating that even after the interim Iraqi government has been established, the Iraqi army will answer to US commander Lieut. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez. In order to pull this off, Washington is relying on a legalistic reading of a clause in UN Security Council Resolution 1511, which puts US forces in charge of Iraq's security until "the completion of the political process" in Iraq. Since the "political process" in Iraq is never-ending, so, it seems, is US military control.

In the same flurry of activity, the CPA announced that it would put further constraints on the Iraqi military by appointing a national security adviser for Iraq. This US appointee would have powers equivalent to those held by Condoleezza Rice and will stay in office for a five-year term, long after Iraq is scheduled to have made the transition to a democratically elected government.

There is one piece of this country, though, that the US government is happy to cede to the people of Iraq: the hospitals. On March 27 Bremer announced that he had withdrawn the senior US advisers from Iraq's Health Ministry, making it the first sector to achieve "full authority" in the US occupation.

Taken together, these latest measures paint a telling picture of what a "free Iraq" will look like: The United States will maintain its military and corporate presence through fourteen enduring military bases and the largest US Embassy in the world. It will hold on to authority over Iraq's armed forces, its security and economic policy and the design of its core infrastructure—but the Iraqis can deal with their decrepit hospitals all by themselves, complete with their chronic drug shortages and lack of the most basic sanitation capacity. (US Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson revealed just how low a priority this was when he commented that Iraq's hospitals would be fixed if the Iraqis "just washed their hands and cleaned the crap off the walls.")

On nights when there are no nearby explosions, we hang out at the hotel, jumping at the sound of car doors slamming. Sometimes we flick on the news and eavesdrop on a faraway debate about whether invading Iraq has made Americans safer. Few seem interested in the question of whether the invasion has made *Iraqis* feel safer, which is too bad because the questions are intimately related. As Khamis says, "It's not the war that caused the hatred. It's what they did after. What they are doing now." ■

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Democracy Is in the Streets

DANIEL WILKINSON

OPENING MEXICO: The Making of a Democracy.
By Julia Preston and Samuel Dillon. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 592 pp. $30.

If you found George W. Bush's 2000 victory in Florida difficult to stomach, imagine being on the losing side of Mexico's 1988 presidential election. Early results on election night showed the opposition candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas on his way toward a victory that would end six decades of one-party rule. But then functionaries from the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) switched off the computer terminals where opposition leaders were tracking the vote count, claimed that technical problems had made the results unavailable and announced that their own candidate, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, had won a "smashing and irrefutable triumph."

Over the coming days reports of irregularities poured in—children marking blank ballots for Salinas, gunmen stealing ballot boxes, and ballots for Cárdenas turning up burned, dumped in ravines and floating in rivers. In thousands of precincts, PRI officials inflated the Salinas vote by simply tacking a zero onto the tally (so, for instance, 73 votes became 730). When opposition representatives challenged this practice in one district, the PRI-dominated electoral committee voted to disregard the complaint. When the opposition protested, the committee president reproached them for disrupting the process, exclaiming, "Please respect our democracy!"

The sham was so brazen, so cynical, that most Americans reading about it are likely to wonder—even after Florida 2000—how anyone could get away with it.

In *Opening Mexico*, Julia Preston and Samuel Dillon provide the answer, showing how the PRI was able to pull off this and countless other coups, yet ultimately could not stem the demand for democracy in Mexico. The Pulitzer Prize–winning pair, who covered Mexico for the *New York Times* in the 1990s, have written an insightful and engaging account of the "prolonged, slow-motion, largely peaceful democratic revolution" that culminated in the election of opposition candidate Vicente Fox in 2000. The book is a highly readable primer on recent Mexican history and a fascinating case study of the multiple ways public pressure can undermine an antidemocratic regime. At the same time, it offers important clues as to why even free and fair elections have left many people in Mexico—and throughout the region—feeling disenfranchised.

The Institutional Revolutionary Party held a grip on Mexican politics for seven decades, until the 'perfect dictatorship' collapsed.

The book opens on Election Day 2000, with the morning jitters of voters headed to the polls giving way during the afternoon to disbelief and anguish, astonishment and joy, as the rival camps realized where the vote was headed, and culminating in the evening with the decisive moment that transformed Mexico, in the eyes of the world, into a genuine democracy—not when the news media reported their polling results, nor when the Federal Election Institute announced the official tally, but when President Ernesto Zedillo went on national television to do something no PRI president had ever done after a national election: concede his party's defeat.

Zedillo was the last of twelve consecutive presidents from a regime born of the chaos of the Mexican Revolution—a series of

Daniel Wilkinson covers Latin America for Human Rights Watch. His book Silence on the Mountain: Stories of Terror, Betrayal and Forgetting in Guatemala *(Houghton Mifflin) received the 2003 PEN/Albrand Award.*

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regional rebellions and counter-rebellions that unleashed demands for social justice, left hundreds of thousands dead and led to the creation in 1917 of a constitution that, as Preston and Dillon write, both recognized "the social claims of the insurgent masses" and laid "the groundwork for the restoration of rigorous central authority."

That central authority was concentrated in the figure of the president, who was chosen every six years in a "stage play" of an election, managed by the PRI to guarantee the official candidate's victory, "by persuasion if possible, by coercion if necessary." Each president handpicked his successor, leading some pundits to joke that Mexico had perfected the "one man, one vote" system.

That system produced presidents like José López Portillo, who was elected in 1976 with 91.9 percent of the vote in an uncontested election, then plunged the country into its worst economic crisis since the Great Depression and still managed to build himself a retirement compound in Mexico City that included five mansions with tennis courts, swimming pools, stables and a gym. These presidents wielded enormous power with no accountability, choosing not only their successors but also state governors and other key officials, and sharing with the chosen the considerable perks of a lucrative profession. (The profits to be made in public service were such that one Mexico City mayor observed, "A politician who is poor is a poor politician.")

The power and wealth were also shared with PRI-affiliated labor leaders, whose unions won higher wages and benefits for workers in good times and held wage demands in check in bad, securing millions of votes for the PRI every six years and stifling dissent with ruthless efficiency. "We came to power by the force of arms," the country's most powerful union leader once said of the PRI, "and nobody is going to get us out of here at the point of a speech."

At its apex, Preston and Dillon write, the system was "an electoral democracy with no fair elections; a federation in which all power was centralized in the presidency; and a revolutionary state where the workers were dominated and demobilized." For several decades, it functioned smoothly, delivering stability, economic growth and basic services to much of Mexican society. But over time, the PRI's authoritarian populism lost its populist bent and increasingly began to display the sort of gap between rhetoric and performance that is characteristic of regimes that claim popular mandates they could never win in fair elections.

Two cataclysmic events would expose that gap for what it was, reshaping the country's political landscape and eroding the foundations of PRI legitimacy. The first came in 1968, when student activists began pressing for the release of political prisoners and the repeal of laws used to jail dissenters. Their efforts tapped into deep currents of public disaffection with PRI rule, and they were soon drawing hundreds of thousands of people to street demonstrations. Like its counterparts around the world, this movement was part political protest and part cultural revolution, with students flouting authority in ways that were, in the moral universe of the PRI, entirely beyond the pale—such as gathering in front of the National Palace and shouting at the president inside: "Come on out, Monkey Big-Snout!"

Mexico's democracy was born of cataclysms: the 1968 student massacre, the 1985 earthquake and the 1994 Zapatista uprising.

The president at the time, Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, did indeed have a sizable snout, a short temper and—when it came to curbing dissent—a heavy hand. Where his predecessors had calibrated their use of coercive force with a certain degree of subtlety, Díaz Ordaz unleashed his security forces on the protesters, detaining and beating students, and imposing a virtual state of siege in Mexico City. The confrontations culminated with a showdown in a public plaza in the Tlatelolco district of the city, when army troops opened fire on the protesters, killing or wounding hundreds. The exact number was never disclosed, as the government trucked away the corpses, cleaned up the streets, prohibited the press from reporting what had taken place and began a cover-up that has lasted three decades.

The second transformative cataclysm was an earthquake in 1985, which brought down hundreds of buildings in Mexico City and buried an untold number of Mexicans—untold, again, because the government suppressed the figures (Preston and Dillon estimate 20,000 dead). The government was slow to respond and reluctant to recognize the scale of the disaster. As offers for help poured in from around the world, President Miguel de la Madrid announced that Mexicans were "ready to return to normal life" and didn't need foreign help.

Only after a second quake hit and the staggering loss of life could no longer be denied did the government react in a more serious fashion. But, as in 1968, the PRI authorities showed more concern with restoring order than with saving lives. It placed the ruins off-limits to the public, claiming they were unsafe. And, instead of digging, many troops devoted their energy to blocking the neighbors, relatives and thousands of students who turned out to assist in rescue efforts. The official rescue attempt was lackluster, and the authorities, seeing the buried bodies as potential sources of disease rather than potential survivors, sent in heavy equipment to clear the rubble.

Again it was the university students who stood up to the government, clashing with troops who sought to prevent them from digging in the ruins and lying down in front of bulldozers sent to clear the rubble. At the site of a collapsed hospital, students managed to stop the bulldozers long enough for rescuers to tunnel through to a maternity ward and rescue eight babies.

In addition to saving lives, these spontaneous rescue brigades, and the nongovernmental relief efforts that followed, generated a new conviction among many participants that, by banding together, they could address the needs of Mexican society better than the PRI regime was willing or able to. "We had a sense of the possibility of action and a conviction that we had to act collectively," one student leader recalls in the book. And this conviction would help to fuel the political movement that led to Cárdenas's strong showing in the 1988 election and the subsequent formation of his new political party, the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD).

Opening Mexico offers numerous other examples of popular protest and collective action, ranging widely in their origins, tactics and political orientation, but all contributing to the collective momentum toward democratic change. Fox's conservative party, for example, the National Action Party (PAN), responded on several occasions to dubious results in gubernatorial elections by organizing marches and mass civil disobedience, and by rallying the support of people across the political spectrum.

The most famous recent example is the uprising of the Zapatista National Liberation Army, which burst onto the scene on New Year's Day of 1994, when it captured several towns in Chiapas and, with them, a place on television screens and in newspaper headlines throughout Mexico and around the world. The ragtag army of sev-

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eral thousand Mayans was able to hold the media spotlight far longer than it held the towns, allowing their spokesman, Subcomandante Marcos, to inveigh against the vices of the country's political system on international prime time.

Although the Zapatistas would achieve few of their expressed aims, their justification for taking up arms—that the fraudulent electoral system left them no alternative—did compel Mexico's establishment to seek to prove them wrong. Within weeks of the uprising, the leaders of the PRI, PAN and PRD signed an agreement committing their parties to fix the electoral system; within months they made good on this commitment by passing legislation that greatly improved the way Mexico managed its elections.

If collective protest was the primary engine of democratic change in Mexico, there were also numerous individuals who played decisive roles in shaping its direction and impact. These included journalists, intellectuals, labor leaders, politicians and, yes, even presidents. One of the most interesting aspects of this story is how successive PRI administrations recognized the need to cede some control or risk losing it altogether, and implemented the reforms that ultimately led to the regime's demise.

President Salinas, for example, emerged from the 1988 election as a sore winner but soon realized he needed to repair the damage that the electoral debacle had done to Mexico's image abroad if he was going to accomplish what became the central objective of his presidency: the creation of NAFTA. He needed to show skeptical Americans, among other things, that Mexico had an active opposition. So he entered into talks with the PAN (while continuing to wage political warfare against Cárdenas and the PRD) and conceded to the conservative party's demands for the creation of a nonpartisan Federal Electoral Institute to manage elections.

There were limits, however, to the reforms Salinas was ready to contemplate, as he made clear when he declared, in a state of the union address, that "electoral democracy cannot be attained by engaging in practices that jeopardize the country's stability or the continuity of its institutions."

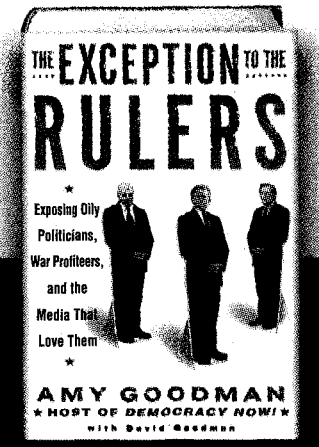
Salinas delivered on NAFTA—but not on stability. The day the treaty went into effect, the Zapatistas launched their uprising in Chiapas, and in the following months the political establishment was rocked by the assassinations, in broad daylight, of his chosen successor, presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio, and the secretary of the PRI, José Francisco Ruiz Massieu.

In December 1994, Mexico's next president, Ernesto Zedillo, inherited an overvalued peso, a staggering $25 billion of short-term, dollar-pegged debt, foreign reserves that could cover only half that debt and lingering stock-market jitters provoked by the Zapatista uprising and the two assassinations earlier in the year. The new administration's plans to maneuver the country out of this precarious situation began to unravel when—after a nearly yearlong cease-fire—the Zapatistas struck again. News that the guerrillas had occupied thirty-eight villages (although they had in fact only occupied one, and briefly at that) prompted the Mexican stock index to plunge, which in turn prompted the finance minister to devalue the peso, which led investors to panic and, within a few days, the economy to crash.

It was clear to Zedillo that the old PRI system was crumbling and could no longer provide the stability (not to mention social welfare) that had been its central promise. While he shared Salinas's neoliberal worldview, he also identified democracy as a prerequisite for flourishing markets. Moreover, Preston and Dillon write, "with the economy in ruins, more political freedom was all Zedillo had to offer opposition leaders to win a minimum of their cooperation for the harsh fiscal recovery program" he pursued to address the country's economic woes. So he pushed additional electoral reforms through Congress that consolidated the independence of the elections agency and made it virtually impossible for the PRI to steal another election.

This story lends some credence to the free-marketeer mantra that economic liberalization promotes democratic change. But if neoliberals helped make Mexico's democracy, they did so in response to circumstances that were not of their own choosing. Salinas's democratic reforms were necessary to attract foreign investment; Zedillo's, to clean up the mess after the investors fled. What is perhaps most ironic is that—by facilitating the flow of capital in and out of Mexico—the neoliberals helped make it possible for a band of poorly armed indigenous peasants from the rainforests of Chiapas to hit them where it would actually hurt: Wall Street.

Preston and Dillon have done a very skillful job of weaving together a wide cast of characters and complex series of events into a single story about the PRI's slow surrender to Mexico's democratic forces. It would have been interesting had they delved more into what "democracy" really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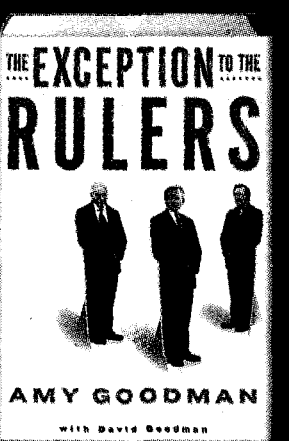

Amy Goodman is the host of *Democracy Now!*, which airs on over 210 radio and television stations.

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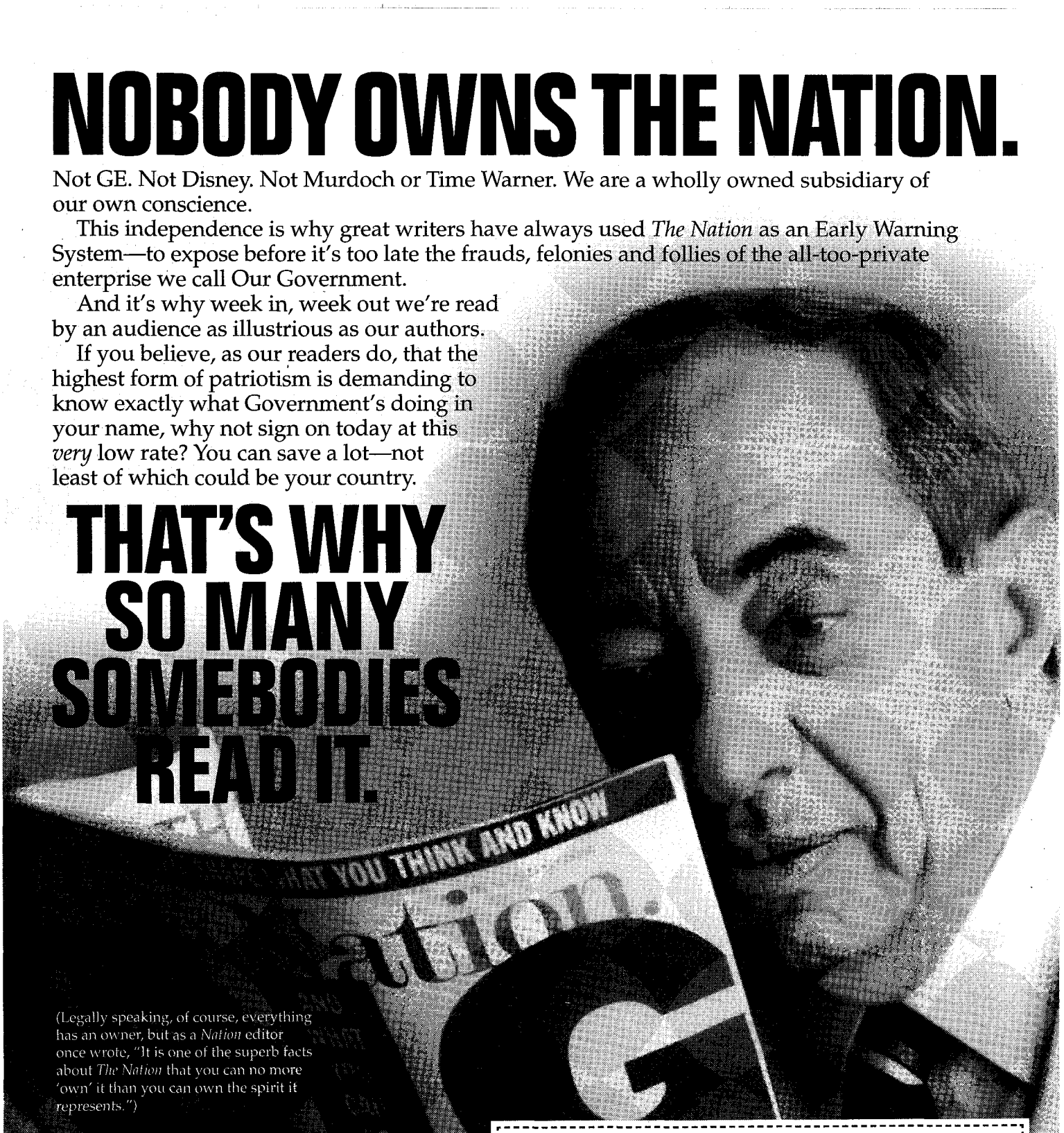

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meant to the diverse actors in their story, and what was at stake for the most marginalized sectors of Mexican society (especially those likely to worry more about their next meal than the next election). Still, in their recounting of the Tlatelolco massacre, the 1985 earthquake and many other crises, they provide a powerful portrait of what was wrong with the PRI and why its defeat in the 2000 election was so thrilling for so many.

The question the book leaves largely open is how much Mexico's vote for change would actually change Mexico. What sort of democracy had Mexicans made?

As Preston and Dillon point out in a short but sobering epilogue, the exhilaration of election night would not last long. Mexico had a new head of state—but not a new state. Fox would have to work with the institutions the PRI had created. And, although it is not the subject of their book, Preston and Dillon provide a vivid sense of some of the problems he would inherit as president.

The most basic problem was the long-standing and habitual subordination of law to politics. It was a problem that predated the PRI, to the centuries of *caudillo* rule, in which a ruler "could not be on the wrong side of the law, since he was the law." The PRI had merely added a veneer of justification by using its revolutionary pretensions to justify its authoritarian methods. Thus, for instance, officials who fixed elections could argue (and even believe) that, as "a revolutionary regime," the PRI had "a historical obligation to retain power."

The pernicious effect of this ends-justify-the-means ethos is most evident in the area of law enforcement, where the practice of torture and the denial of due process have been widespread. The book recounts several prominent criminal convictions that were widely celebrated as victories for justice in Mexico but would be better described as miscarriages. Many Mexicans cheered, for example, when the Salinas administration prosecuted a ruthless and corrupt union boss. But, as Preston and Dillon show, the conviction was based on a coerced confession to trumped-up charges, backed by planted evidence and the testimony of brutally tortured witnesses. "That guy probably committed a lot of crimes," the police investigator in charge of the case told them. "But he didn't commit the ones that Salinas put him in jail for."

Ernesto Zedillo gets credit in the book for being the first president to respect legal restraints on the exercise of his powers. His relative passivity had its downside, however. When asked, for instance, about his failure to intervene in human rights cases, Zedillo explained that his responsibility was to strengthen the rule of law, not to dictate how the justice system should do its job. Preston and Dillon present this response as a matter of conviction rather than an artful dodge. However, as they point out, "his argument seemed to be that it was all right for a major figure in the government party to get away with covering up a mass murder as long as the President didn't interfere with the judicial proceedings." (They also point out that Zedillo didn't object when PRI lawmakers shut down investigations into his own campaign finances and allegedly "fishy" payments he had authorized in the past.)

Mexico's painful lesson is that if government officials aren't accountable for their actions, fair elections can't establish a full democracy.

Years of authoritarian rule had not prepared Mexican law-enforcement officials to enforce the rule of law. If anything, it had refined their capacity and taste for crime. Police officers, Preston and Dillon write, "did not strive to prevent or punish crime; they administered it." And as the PRI presidents shed their authoritarian powers, their ability to contain police criminality diminished.

The problem was not limited to law enforcement. Corruption was rampant throughout the government and the PRI-affiliated unions, providing an alternate source of income and power that would survive the end of PRI rule. Preston and Dillon tell a revealing story of a progressive reformer in Mexico City's first PRD administration who set out to eradicate corrupt practices among garbage collectors, which included requiring tips from all the households on their routes and siphoning off gasoline provided for the garbage trucks. The union leaders told him they would happily end these practices if their members were given decent wages—something his budget would not allow. The other alternative would be leaving the city's garbage to fester on the streets. "When you govern," the would-be reformer told Preston and Dillon, "you realize that you don't have enough money to change the old machinery.... You have to keep going with the old systems so that the city can keep going."

For years Mexico was known as Latin America's "perfect dictatorship" because of the PRI's exceptional ability to co-opt as well as coerce, to deliver tangible benefits to large portions of its population even as it lined the pockets of its party leaders and union bosses. The PRI's relative "perfection" helps explain why it took Mexico longer than other countries in the region to make the transition to electoral democracy.

But Mexicans seem to be wasting little time catching up with the rest of Latin America in discovering the limits of what they can achieve through their elections. In countries throughout the region, economies are contracting, poverty growing, income inequality widening, political institutions failing, corruption scandals blossoming and—as a result of these trends—democracy has been losing its luster. It is more painfully clear than ever that full democracy requires more than fair elections. It requires that government officials be accountable for their actions—especially when those actions are criminal. And it requires that they address the basic needs of their populations.

Accountability was a central theme of Fox's presidential campaign. He promised to end years of official impunity for government abuses. But once in office he confronted a dilemma similar to that of the municipal reformer with his garbage collectors. In Fox's case, it was the fact that the PRI remained the largest force in congress. Hoping to win their support for his reform agenda, Fox chose not to pursue accountability for the PRI's past misdeeds. He reneged on his campaign promise to launch a truth commission. Instead he named a special prosecutor to investigate and prosecute past human rights abuses but failed—at least until recently—to provide him with the resources and political support needed to carry out an enormously difficult assignment. (Only in recent months has the special prosecutor's office begun to receive more substantial government cooperation and political support—and in February, after two years in operation, it made its first arrest.) In the area of corruption, meanwhile, Fox has done little to hold former officials accountable for their crimes or to clean up the corrupt institutions they left behind.

What has Fox gotten in return? Nothing, according to his former foreign minister, Jorge Castañeda, who recently wrote in the *Los Angeles Times*: "The decision to avoid a clean break with the past in exchange for the former ruling Institutional Revolution-

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ary Party's support for reforms turned out to be futile. We ended up with the worst of both worlds: no reforms, no settling of scores with Mexico's recent history and the country virtually paralyzed."

Mexico's situation may be less dire than that of other Latin American countries. Yet foreign investment is shrinking, unemployment is growing, the limited gains from NAFTA appear to be evaporating in the face of Chinese competition and Fox is already being described as a lame duck, even though two years remain in his term.

For decades, Mexicans struggled to end an authoritarian system that concentrated all its power in the hands of the president. It is therefore ironic, if understandable, that the hottest political topic in Mexico today is not any of the reforms that are urgently needed to address deficiencies in the justice system, the tax code, the labor laws and the provision of basic services to impoverished populations. It is, rather, who will be the next president.

The leading contender for the 2006 election is Andrés Manuel López Obrador of the PRD, who has proven to be an effective and very popular mayor of Mexico City (though his image has been tarnished somewhat in recent weeks by a corruption scandal involving current and former PRD officials in the city government). Another prospective candidate is Fox's wife, Martha Sahagún, whose interest in the job has provoked a heated polemic over the proper role of the first lady. A third is Castañeda, who trails badly in the polls but brings a series of ideas for reforms that could contribute to a national debate that is currently lacking.

If history is any guide, however, real change will come only when Mexicans mobilize once again to demand it. ■

Empty Vessel

LAURA SECOR

MILOSEVIC: A Biography. By Adam LeBor. Yale. 404 pp. $35.

For a man who destroyed his country and wrecked or stole hundreds of thousands of lives, Slobodan Milosevic is an oddly colorless villain. When he was Serbia's head of state, his public appearances were wooden and dull. He made no particular display of his wealth, never (unlike Turkmenistan's flamboyant Saparmurat Niyazov, for example) renamed the months of the year for himself or his mother, built no monuments to his hubris and always kept his private life a cipher. No cult of personality kept Milosevic in power; he managed that instead with force, cunning and the systematic exploitation of divisions and weaknesses within the Serbian opposition. Among ordinary Serbs, the name Milosevic often seemed not to connote a man so much as some looming, inanimate force. Serbia under Milosevic was Serbia under a dark, expansive cloud. All that mattered was getting out from under Milosevic, the way you'd want to get out from under a collapsing roof.

London Times correspondent Adam LeBor's excellent new book, *Milosevic: A Biography*, does little to humanize the doughy-faced enigma who now stands trial for genocide at The Hague. One will not read this book to get a feeling for Milosevic's presence in a room, or the patterns of his speech, or the contours of his thought. We already knew that Milosevic's parents were both suicides; that he was an intense, unhappy child; that his wife, Mira Markovic, was his childhood sweetheart and co-conspirator; that he rose to power by stabbing his mentor, Ivan Stambolic, in the back. Beyond that LeBor will not tell us what makes Slobodan Milosevic tick, or why that driven, unhappy boy, unlike so many others who could be similarly described, became the architect of no end of misery in the country of his birth. Like many unauthorized biographies, in other words, LeBor's book circles an absent center. As a result, what LeBor has written is not a character study but a history of the disintegration of Yugoslavia through the lens of Serbian politics.

Many, many histories have been written in the decade and a half since Yugoslavia began to crumble. Nearly all such accounts acknowledge Belgrade politics as the driving force behind the chain of wars, but few do as good a job as this one of understanding those often complex maneuverings and weaving Serbia's experience into the experience of the region as a whole. As LeBor seamlessly demonstrates, Milosevic's degradation (economic, cultural, moral) of his own republic had everything to do with the sufferings he inflicted outside of it. The picture that emerges, though, is not one of an invincible mastermind with an iron grip on events. Rather, Milosevic looks like a man whose personal, small-minded quest for power unleashed forces he could best control by unleashing even uglier forces, ad infinitum. By the end the Serbian state and society were so deeply criminalized that high-ranking members of the regime were assassinated by mafia men in broad daylight at Belgrade cafes. Those mafia men were often the same paramilitaries the Milosevic regime had trained and equipped to ethnically cleanse Croatia and Bosnia. Milosevic's sinister henchmen in Bosnia, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, embarrassingly defied him and, LeBor implies, may even have carried out the appalling Srebrenica massacre not on his orders but intoxicated by their own bloodlust. Milosevic could not put the genie back in the bottle, even when he desperately needed to in order to put an end to the international sanctions that were threatening his regime.

Milosevic may have been sociopathically cruel, but he was not a mad, grandiose, out-of-touch dictator à la Saddam Hussein. For that he kept his self-interest too conspicuously in view. In his diplomatic dealings he was cordial, seemingly reasonable, even voluble and charming, knocking back whiskeys and sometimes bursting into song. LeBor depicts a man who loved the attention he got from heads of foreign states and high-level envoys. He had a particular fondness for America and Americans, having visited New York during his days as a banker. At the 1995 Dayton negotiations that ended the Bosnian war, Milosevic's bonhomie stood him in good stead next to Croatian President Franjo Tudjman's stiff formality and the guilt-inducing lugubriousness of Bosnian president Alija Izetbegovic. In spite of being obviously in the wrong, Milosevic may have won himself and the Bosnian Serbs more concessions than they were due, simply by dint of being pleasant. Indeed, LeBor takes American dignitaries to task for negotiating in good faith with the man otherwise known as the Butcher of the Balkans; for taking him as their interlocutor even during the brief period when more reasonable men occupied responsible positions within his government; and for viewing him as the solution to the problem of which he was

Laura Secor, a former senior editor at Lingua Franca *and ideas correspondent for the* Boston Globe, *is a writer in New York.*

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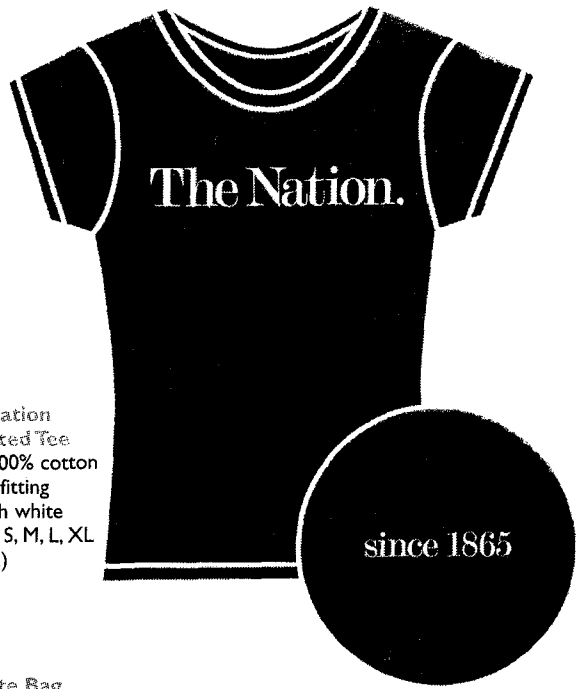

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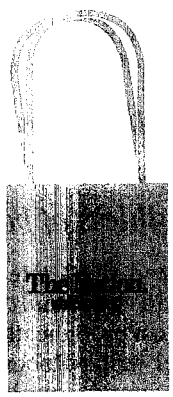

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also the cause. In mounting his defense at The Hague, Milosevic is expected to call as witnesses the Americans with whom he once dined and negotiated, during the very period when the crimes of which he stands accused were committed. This ought to be a disconcerting development, in LeBor's view. Much of the evidence arrayed against Milosevic consists of American intelligence that was surely available at the time.

If Milosevic thrived on the attentions of diplomats, it's hard to understand exactly why he backed himself into a corner reserved for the world's pariahs. Particularly as NATO began to bombard Serbia in March 1999, Milosevic emerged not as a master manipulator currying favor but as a proud, stubborn and ultimately self-destructive local tyrant. LeBor suggests that Milosevic figured that if he hung tough, the NATO alliance would splinter. Kosovo was not, after all, a popular war in the United States, let alone in Europe. But then he scuttled his own plan by carrying out a brutal wave of killings and expulsions in Kosovo, as though he simply didn't bank on CNN's broadcasting images of refugees to the world's unanimous disgust. Not only did he lose the war but in clamping down on the Serbian opposition afterward, he provided its warring factions with a common cause. On October 5, 2000, nonviolent demonstrators gleefully toppled the Milosevic regime. Less than a year later Milosevic was arrested, jailed in Serbia and eventually extradited to The Hague.

If Milosevic was committed above all to maintaining his own power, why did he take such counterproductive measures in 1999? If, on the other hand, his commitment was to the Serbian national cause, what explains his total abandonment of Croatia's Serbs in 1995, when the lawless parastate he had supported was ethnically cleansed of Serb civilians by the Croatian Army's Operation Storm? Was Milosevic an ideologue or merely an opportunist? Until a biographer gains access to the man or his papers, Milosevic's motivations, at least as he understands them himself, will remain opaque. LeBor works from published sources and extensive interviews with Milosevic's wife and former cronies, most interestingly Dusan Mitevic, onetime head of the propagandistic Serbian state television, and Hrvoje Sarinic, onetime secret Croatian envoy to Belgrade.

The record is reasonably clear that from the time Milosevic took over the Serbian Communist Party in 1986, he aspired to autocratic power over the largest swath of Yugoslavia possible. To that end, he revoked in 1989 the autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina, the two provinces whose self-government effectively checked Serbian power within the Yugoslav federation. He also steered allies into the highest offices of the Yugoslav republic of Montenegro. These moves practically sealed Yugoslavia's fate. A federation disproportionately dominated by Serbia, and by a power-hungry Serb politician at that, was not the Yugoslavia Croats and Slovenes had signed up for. The country hurtled down the highway to civil war, nationalist folk tunes blaring from the windows.

Throughout the Yugoslav conflicts, two narratives competed fiercely for attention, particularly in Europe and the United States, where each entailed a clear chain of policy responses. One, most prominently associated with the travel writer Robert Kaplan, held that the Yugoslav wars resulted from deeply ingrained ethnic hostilities, which themselves sprang from the national character of Serbs and Croats; or from the repressed memory of the Second World War; or even from medieval Balkan history. Those who took this view of the Balkan wars suggested that nothing could really be done from outside to halt or contain them. Exponents of the second view, who urged international intervention, insisted that the ugliness arose from the actions of cynical leaders. Yugoslavia's longest and most recent history, they pointed out, was of peaceful cohabitation. To buy the line about ancient ethnic hatreds (or "Balkan ghosts," as Kaplan put it) was to abandon the cosmopolitan Yugoslavs to the machinations of the atavistic few. LeBor's account provides a less politically instrumental and more nuanced picture than either of these two views.

Milosevic, the architect of ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia, wasn't so much a nationalist ideologue as a ruthless opportunist.

From the day in April 1987 when Milosevic, then a party functionary under Stambolic's wing, assured a crowd of angry Kosovo Serbs, "No one should dare to beat you again," Milosevic was credited with unleashing the deadly toxin of ethnic grievance. As LeBor demonstrates with insight and subtlety, however, Milosevic was neither the gray-suited apparatchik his leaden speeches would imply, nor was he a fiery demagogue. Nationalist sentiment thrummed under the surface of post-Tito Yugoslavia for nearly all of the 1980s. It drew upon history, mythology and living memory of the Second World War. But that did not predetermine that it would splinter the country. Indeed, it might have come to nothing. But Milosevic quickly grasped that he could use Serbia's nationalists in his quest for power. They, however, thought they could use him in theirs.

With Milosevic now in the dock, new violence brewing in Kosovo and ultranationalists having made a shockingly strong showing in Serbia's fall 2003 elections, it might seem that in the end the nationalists got the better end of this bargain. Until the fall of 2000, however, the upper hand clearly belonged to Milosevic. He made nationalist ideologues his front men, then dumped them when they became inconvenient. He had his state-run television whip up a frenzy of sympathy for Croatia's Serbian parastate, then dropped it like a hot potato when it no longer served his interests to support it. His wife, Mira, never abandoned her leftist, nearly Maoist, rhetoric, condemning in print the very chauvinist thugs her husband promoted. In LeBor's telling, the Milosevic household was quite possibly riven by the national question—not because Slobodan actually committed himself to a nationalist ideology (though his feelings about the Serbian claim on Kosovo, according to LeBor, were genuine, as was his hatred of Albanians) but because the thugs he found politically useful espoused an ideology Mira found cosmetically distasteful. Post-Communist Yugoslavia was a political hall of mirrors. Ideology was contentless.

The Serbian economy, too, was a land of make-believe. The story of the criminalization of the Serbian economy and the impoverishment of the Serbs is nothing new, but LeBor's narrative lucidly conveys how deliberately the plunder was orchestrated from above. Isolated under sanctions, the Milosevic regime was starved for foreign currency and devised every means to extract it from the pockets of Serbian citizens. As LeBor recounts, this involved printing absurd amounts of money, which in turn produced mind-boggling hyperinflation. The regime also convinced citizens to invest in pyramid schemes run by friends of the ruling family. Soon enough a country that had enjoyed a near Western standard of living throughout the cold war was reduced to squalid desperation. Anyone who truly believed Milosevic was a nationalist might be disabused of such notions by LeBor's

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hard look at the Serbian leader's contempt for his own people. Milosevic stood for Milosevic, nothing more.

If Milosevic was a colorless villain, his family provided Serbia with a little dark comic relief. The Serbian leader's children, Marko and Marija, exemplified the crass, brutal, self-seeking criminal culture their father's regime had cultivated. Marko terrorized the small town of Pozarevac, where his parents were born. He ran several shady business outfits, including a nightclub, a cut in the cigarette-smuggling business and a park called Bambiland. Marija ran a radio station, packed heat and flew into rages. And of course, there were few public figures Serbs loved to hate more than Slobo's wife, with her intellectual pretensions, her incoherent diary column in a Belgrade magazine, her jealous death grip on her husband and the flower she liked to wear in her hair. LeBor spent good time with Mira, and his book is enlivened by lengthy quotes from their discussions.

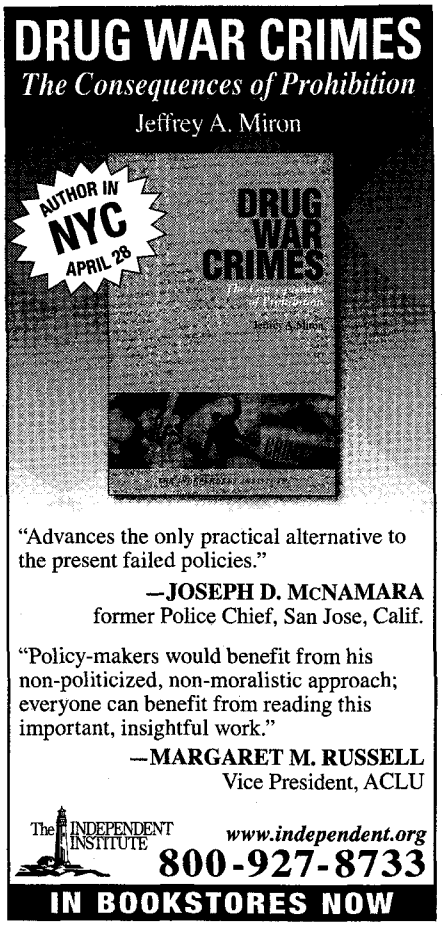
Mira's grip on reality is demonstrably weak. She is fond of saying things don't exist that clearly do. When a BBC reporter asked Mira about something that appeared about her in the Croatian magazine *Globus*, she characteristically replied, "Honestly, I've never heard of such a magazine. I don't know about its existence or what it says, and what you just said is like telling me it's Sunday today whereas it's actually Tuesday." Her life was apparently shaped by the early abandonment of her father, a partisan hero, and by a romanticized, heroic memory of her dead mother, his lover during the war who was later executed on murky charges of spying for the Nazis. Mira rejected the official history that viewed her mother as a traitor, preferring instead to cast her as a martyr to the partisan cause.

By all accounts, Mira encouraged her husband's ambitions and helped mastermind his rise to power. She publicly feuded with some of his nationalist attack dogs, like the fascist paramilitary leader and indicted war criminal Vojislav Seselj. But she was more successful in severing her husband's ties with friends and family members of whom she was jealous. Serbia's ruling couple forged a bond so exclusive and co-dependent that virtually no one could get truly close to either of them. Ivan Stambolic, whom Milosevic would betray in his rise to power and in connection with whose assassination Mira is wanted by The Hague, was not only Milosevic's mentor but his *kum*, or best man. Serbian culture values friendship like family and considers a man's *kum* to be something almost more than a brother. But of Stambolic Mira told LeBor, "They were not such great friends. People have made that up, we were not even family friends. We did not visit each other. I could spend three days denying all the things that were written about us."

Beyond denying, however, are the hilarious transcripts of Croatian secret service wiretaps of the Milosevic family telephones, published in *Globus* and excerpted in *Milosevic*. My favorite is a 1997 conversation between Milosevic and his son Marko, who wants to have an operation to pin back his ears:

> Slobodan: Alright, my lovely. Listen, I've been talking to a doctor here and I did some thinking with my own head. You know why it looks that way to you? Because you're terribly skinny, and every geek your age looks that way. As soon as you fill out and, as they say, stabilize a bit, everything will fall into place. I looked even worse at your age.
> Marko: Look, I agree, but I do not intend to start looking good in fifteen years.
> Slobodan: Marko, what I want to tell you is that it only appears that way because you're skinny. Even a chicken has some fat behind the ears. And you have only bones, you see, so any violence against nature is stupid. Secondly, you are handsome as a doll, your father's image. So don't screw around.
> Marko: But dad...
> Slobodan: I'm against it and I am your parent. There you go.
> Marko: Excellent. And I am in favor of it and I am of age.
> Slobodan: Well, since you're of age, I'm going to beat you up as soon as you show up here.... I want to tell you this only because you're skinny. Your head is all drawn thin, your stomach is like a five-dinar coin (i.e., thin). Why don't you put some more fat on it?

There is something so tantalizingly weird about hearing Slobodan Milosevic speak man-to-man with his son about his ears. It is also in perfect keeping with Milosevic's prosaic life and rule. Maybe the authorized—or posthumous—Milosevic biography will one day read as nothing but this: the catalogue of a small man's small life. The great stuff of even a villain's biography—grand delusions, battles of conscience, doubts and regrets followed by self-deceit—may simply require a greater man. ■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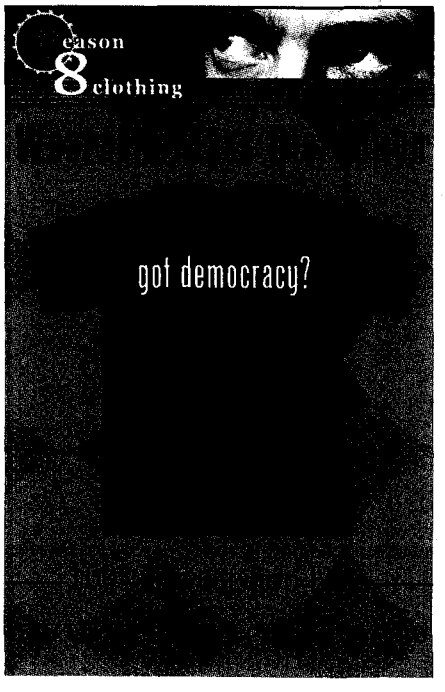

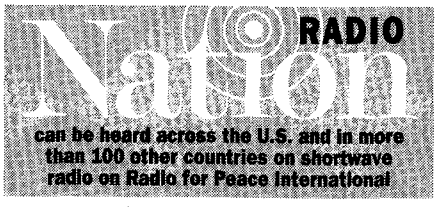
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ART

Staring at the Sea

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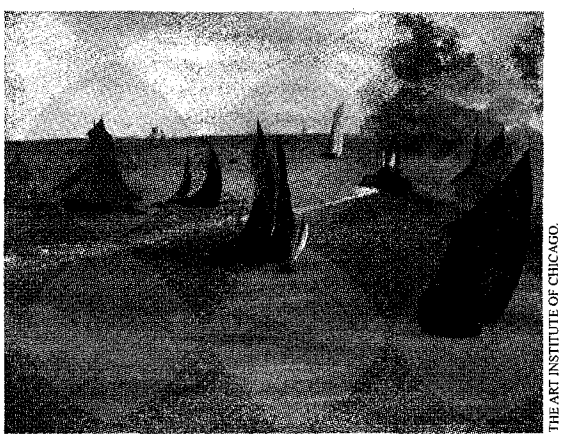
ÉDOUARD MANET

It's my lot to be abused and I take it philosophically.
—Édouard Manet to Antonin Proust, May 1880

Toward the end of January, I received an invitation to a press opening for "Manet and the Sea," at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. It reproduced a painting of people on a beach, taking the sea air. The scene was as fresh as the air itself, bringing a virtual whiff of saltwater, a feeling of sunshine and physical happiness, and of the freedom and adventure the mere thought of the ocean awakens. In part because of the harsh cold we had all been enduring, in part because of the surge of pleasure French painting of that era always induces, I simply forgave the phrase in the press release ("The artist and 8 contemporaries chart a new course toward pure painting") and resolved to *fuir là-bas*—"flee down there," to cite Mallarmé's great poem "Sea Breeze"—even if *là-bas* was Philadelphia in February rather than Boulogne-sur-Mer in August.

The chief problem of the press description is that it invites us to view the show as pointing the way to pure painting, whatever that is, instead of situating the works in the art world of their time. Manet's 1868 *Beach at Boulogne*, with the lightness, the clarity, the sense of life at its best, conveyed by the loosely sketched disjunction of holidaymakers surrendering to simple summer enjoyments more than a century ago—promenading under parasols, peering at seashells, wading, gazing at the passing boats, riding a docile donkey, playing in the sand—is a wonderful work in itself. It is not a finished tableau but preserves the quality of a sketch, however intensely Manet may have worked on it; it is clear, just from looking at it, that he transcribed onto the canvas pictorial notations from his sketchbooks, drawn on the spot. It resembles a horizontal scroll, with the kind of spontaneously drawn figures the Japanese master Hokusai distributed across a sheet for one of his booklets. The figures have little to do with one another, without that implying, as a wall text suggests, a proposition regarding the loneliness of modern life. Who really cares what in the twentieth century it heralds? Who really cares about pure painting when one stands in front of it?

Writing of one of Manet's masterpieces, *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, a hostile critic once observed that his paintings had the quality of rebuses. A rebus is a kind of puzzle in which pictures are juxtaposed that have nothing obvious to do with one another. One solves a rebus by pronouncing the names of the objects the pictures show, producing a coherent message. Freud thought the images in a dream have the apparent dislogic of a rebus, and there is a sense in which *The Beach at Boulogne* has the quality of a dream, with the difference that there is no organizing interpretation to seek. The beach and the sea beyond it have an essential emptiness, with people dotted here and there on the one and boats dashed here and there on the other. It is not a Salon picture, like most of the paintings most of us know by Manet. It feels as if it were made for pleasure and to give pleasure, rather than for the heroic purpose of creating Modernism.



THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, POTTER PALMER COLLECTION, 1922.425

Steamboat Leaving Boulogne **(1864)**

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The year it was painted, Manet wrote to the painter Henri Fantin-Latour that he had no intention of getting involved in large-scale works and that he simply wanted to make some money. It is nice to know there was a market for what one might think of as anti-Salon paintings in France at the time. Perhaps this explains why most of us know so little of Manet as a painter of marines. They do not really belong to the canonical narrative of struggle between him and the juries of the official Salon, which defined him as the pivotal painter of his time. Yet according to curator Joseph Rishel, speaking for the show's organizers, about forty of Manet's 400 or so paintings can loosely be classed as seascapes—a figure that is all the more remarkable considering Manet's indifference to landscape, the preferred genre of his Impressionist peers. (The Philadelphia show includes thirty-three of his seascapes, along with works on paper.) So what accounts for the fact that he painted enough seascapes to justify a major exhibition?

The reason 10 percent of Manet's *oeuvre* has to do with the sea may simply be that his family spent its holidays at the shore rather than in the mountains. That they are for the most part holiday paintings filled with the expansive spirit of time off accounts, I think, for the pleasure that is generally objectified in this body of work. It is not, I may add, quite so palpable in the "8 contemporaries" whose sea paintings are shown alongside Manet's. Their marines suggest quite different agendas from his, though they are no more concerned than he is with charting a "new course toward pure painting." Manet's defining agenda derives from the perspective of reinventing painting and at the same time achieving success in the Salon, which meant that his work was destined for scandal. None of this affects his paintings of the sea, which means that the show in Philadelphia brings us an artist very different from the one we learned about in Art History 101.

Manet knew a great deal about the ocean, having taken a six-month voyage to Rio de Janeiro at age 17 as a kind of cram course for the French Naval Academy, whose entrance examination he twice failed. Becoming a naval officer was an acceptable way of not following in his father's footsteps, but since he was hopeless at passing examinations, the failures freed him to become an artist. Manet recalled an episode in which the captain ordered him to repaint some Dutch cheeses that had been discolored by seawater, providing him with a pot of red lead and some brushes. "The cheeses glistened like tomatoes," he told his friend Antonin Proust: "The natives devoured them down to the rind." There was an outbreak of stomach disorders in the populace, which nobody diagnosed as lead poisoning. "In business discretion is essential," Manet said. "I didn't say a word and...from then on the captain treated me with exceptional consideration and he for one was convinced of my talent." Not even painting the outside of cheeses to make them look delicious can be counted an example of pure painting.

Manet's first known seascape was painted in a rush in 1864. It depicts a battle that took place on June 19 off the coast of Cherbourg between the USS Kearsarge and the Confederate battleship CSS Alabama—a decisive naval engagement of the American Civil War, since the marauding Alabama had single-handedly disrupted commerce between France and the Union. Exhibited about a month later, it is a brilliantly imagined painting, whose dramatic subject is reinforced by the urgency of its execution. Manet was an *alla prima* painter: He did not build an image up through glazes but worked directly on the canvas with the same hues the finished canvas would have, so the final stages of the work would preserve the vivacity it had in the beginning. The painting was, like most of his work, done in his studio; he was not, that is, standing behind his easel on the Norman coast when the Alabama's engines exploded, as in one of Mark Tansey's spoofs. He read about the battle in the morning papers, and based his composition on Dutch paintings of sea battles. Manet characteristically made use of art-historical models. *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* notoriously exploits Giorgione's *Fête Champêtre* in the Louvre, as well as a lost *Judgment of Paris* by Raphael, known through a famous engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi. His *Olympia* appropriates Titian's *Venus of Urbino*. No stigma attached to these borrowings—it was standard artistic practice. The Louvre was essentially a research facility for French painters, and, if anything, the ability to recognize allusions was part of the pleasure of looking at art. Originality lay elsewhere. "Manet and the Sea" displays some early Dutch and French marines that Manet could have used as paradigms. Ludolf Backhuysen's 1690 *Dutch Vessels on a Stormy Sea* may well have helped Manet visualize the action in the battle between the Kearsarge and the Alabama.

Manet underwent a singular humiliation at the hands of the Salon judges in 1863. That year, the number of rejections amounted to a scandal, and Louis Napoleon him-

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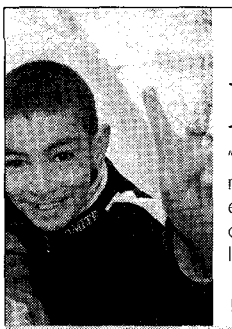

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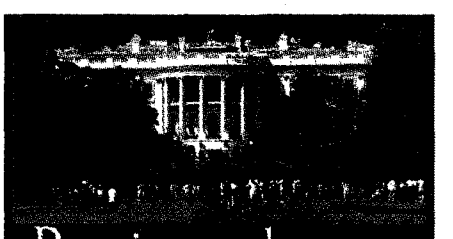

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self decreed that the now legendary Salon des Réfusés should be set up, a few weeks after the official opening of the Salon, so that people could judge the paintings for themselves. It says a great deal about Manet that he decided to show his three rejected pieces there rather than withdraw them with dignity—better the Salon des Réfusés than no Salon at all. So he exposed his spurned submissions, including his masterpiece, *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, to critical and popular ridicule. My sense is that he saw his sea battle as a winner, which explains his haste to get it done and up, even if too late for the 1864 Salon—he showed it in the window of a print shop. It could well have been the success of Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* that inspired the decision.

In any case, *The Battle of the U.S.S. "Kearsarge" and the C.S.S. "Alabama"* was a triumph, as exciting today as the day it was finished. In the middle distance, the stern of the Alabama, black smoke billowing from its engines, is already sinking, as crew members board a lowered lifeboat. The Kearsarge, its hull partly screened by white gunsmoke, is just behind it. In the lower left, a pilot boat cuts through the surf on a rescue mission, toward seamen clinging to a spar (the figure in the stern wears the shirtsleeves and top hat of a surgeon). In the upper right, a British steamer waits for survivors in the pale morning light. How much Manet remembered from his sailing days, how much from seascapes studied in the museum, is impossible to determine. What is unmistakably his are the black shapes of the boats and curls of white paint that bring the surf to life—and the way the Alabama's bow thrusts into the air like the nose of a proud, dying beast whose rear legs have been shattered.

The Battle of the U.S.S. "Kearsarge" and the C.S.S. "Alabama" is every inch a *tableau du Salon*, and indeed it was shown in that format, which defined success as Manet conceived it, in 1872. *The Beach at Boulogne* breathes another spirit entirely, but it is still Manet. "What I've always longed to do," he said to Méry Laurent, a friend of his and of Mallarmé, "would be to place women like you in green outdoor settings, among flowers, on beaches, where contours are eaten away in the open air, and everything melts and mingles in the bright light of day, because I can assure you I'm not just an insensitive brute. Only a fool could think I'm out to create a sensation." Laurent had been admiring *Le Linge*—a surprisingly sentimental painting, now at the Barnes, of a woman in a pretty bonnet being helped by her little girl to put away laundry. It looks, untypically, like an Impressionist canvas. Today, we might say Manet was allowing his feminine side to show. But the "contours are eaten away" in the seascapes as well as the beach scenes. The magnificent *Moonlight, Boulogne* shows a group of shawled women, featureless in the shadows created by the same intense moonlight that silhouettes the ships docked alongside the jetty, under a starlit sky. The scandals were caused as much by Manet's style as by his subjects. "I don't know where Manet is going," a critic wrote about Manet's contributions to the Salon des Réfusés, "and if I'm not mistaken I don't think he does either." This is astute. The conflict, which is all too easy to simplify, was part of who he was and what makes him so fascinating an artist to those of us who have learned to live with pluralism and accept the fact that artists may pursue several directions at once.

Though it was his first seascape, Manet's success with *The Battle of the U.S.S. "Kearsarge" and the C.S.S. "Alabama"* established his reputation in that genre, so much so that when Claude Monet made his Salon debut in 1865 with some very ambitious seascapes, a good many visitors misread his signature as "Manet." The

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■ April 15–17. A conference on the future of area knowledge. War and US empire are remaking the map of the world. How is new scholarship, in the corporatizing university, impacting this? What new models of area knowledge are emerging from within cultural, social and geographic theory? How can these serve to resist growing repression and racism in the United States and elsewhere? With Gilbert Achcar, Arjun Appadurai, Swapna Banerjee-Guha, Moustafa Bayoumi, Joel Beinin, Tim Brennan, Carolyn Cartier, Jeff Derksen, Piero Gleijeses, Peter Gowan, David Harvey, Gil Hart, Cindi Katz, Peter Linebaugh, Diana Liverman, Masao Miyoshi, David Nugent, Jose Palafox, Christian Parenti, Victoria Sanford and others. Center for Place, Culture, & Politics, Graduate Center, City University of New York, 365 Fifth Ave. See web.gc.cuny.edu/pcp or call (212) 817-1880.

Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen

■ New School University's Irene & Bernard L. Schwartz Lecture Series presents Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, on "The Content of Democracy." Respondents: New School University Provost Arjun Appadurai and Graduate Faculty Dean Richard Bernstein. University President Bob Kerrey will moderate. Thursday, April 22, 6 PM, at New School University, Tishman Auditorium, 66 West 12th Street. Admission is free. Seats are limited, reservations strongly suggested. Call (212) 229-5488 or boxoffice@newschool.edu. This event will be webcast live at www.dialnsa.edu.

Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade

■ Join us for the 68th reunion of the Lincoln Brigade, Sunday, May 2, 1:30 PM at the Skirball Center for the Performing Arts (60 Washington Square South). Featuring *Nation* publisher Victor Navasky, emcee Henry Foner and the musical revue "Patriots Act!" with Barbara Dane and the San Francisco Mime Troupe. Tickets: (212) 674-5552.

The Dynastic Presidency 2004 and the Religious Right

■ April 13, 7–9 PM: Kevin Phillips (radio/TV commentator; author of *New York Times* bestseller *American Dynasty*) and Charles Lewis (founder of the Center for Public Integrity; author of *NY Times* bestseller *The Buying of the President 2004*). New York Society for Ethical Culture, 2 West 64th Street, New York, NY 10023; (212) 874-5210, ext. 118; www.nysec.org. Free.

The advertising deadline for Events is every Monday. Rates: $150 for up to 50 words; $225 for up to 75 words. To place an ad, call Leigh at (212) 209-5414.

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1865 Salon was a debacle for Manet: *Olympia* and *Christ Mocked by Soldiers* were widely ridiculed, and it chafed him that Monet's paintings were admired while his own work was denounced. "Who is this Monet?" he asked, believing, whoever the artist was, that he was benefiting from Manet's notoriety and his manner, using a misleading name. It was an inauspicious beginning for a relationship that came to mean a great deal to both artists, and the exhibition has a very generous display of Monet's marines, which gives us a chance to appreciate how he pointed a direction to Manet that helped loosen him up. The relationship is almost dialectical: The Manet-Monet confusions of the 1865 Salon helped get Monet started on his career, which in turn opened possibilities for Manet that he would not have found for himself. Manet's 1874 Venetian seascape, *The Grand Canal (Blue Venice)*, is simply an Impressionist painting—a study of light, broken and reflected by the movement of water, with a gondola bobbing alongside blue-striped poles, as in a souvenir postcard. Two paintings, one by Monet of his wife, Camille, on the beach at Trouville, the other by Manet of his wife, Suzanne, sitting next to his brother Eugène on the beach at Berck, show how close to one another the orbits of the two painters came at a certain moment. Because of Monet, Manet became an outdoor painter for a time. Impressionism was a seductive style, but it would not finally satisfy the fierce ambitions that exposed him to the shattering defeats he suffered in Salon after Salon. It is one of the great continuing confrontations in the history of art.

Exhibitions at the Philadelphia Museum are always, somehow, celebratory. The gallery is painted in Manet colors for the occasion—blue and gray. The "8 contemporaries" pursue pure painting along the side walls. At the entrance, the organizers have placed a still life with a marvelous fish lying on a tablecloth next to a polished copper casserole, along with a handful of oysters, an eel, a lemon and one of those odd red creatures one sees in baskets at fish markets in France. It stretches the concept of a seascape to open a show of marines with a painting that proclaims the pleasures of French cuisine—but the wit of placing it there brings out the wit of the painting itself, and is a tribute to Manet himself, who might have submitted it to a show of marines with the same impishness in which he replaced a goddess with a cocotte and sardonically called her Olympia. His wit thoroughly inflected his work and his life. I think it is what he meant by reacting philosophically to his ordeals. ■

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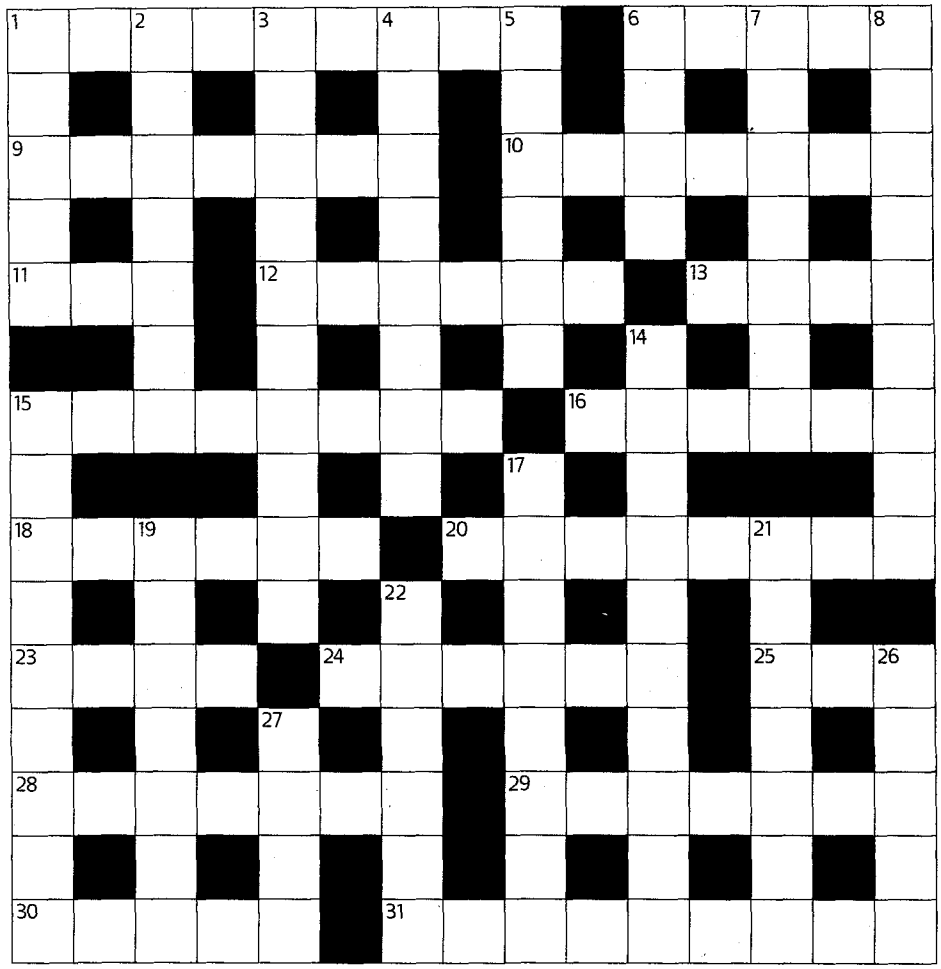

ACROSS

1 Not necessarily an endearment for the Nutcracker fairy. (9)

6 A false—very false—way to describe those little pests! (5)

9 In royal fashion, especially at table… (1,2,4)

10 …where you might expect to find the heads, commonly. (7)

11 A bad lie for a biblical type! (3)

12 Take up residence on the old couch? (6)

13 See 6 down

15, 29 and **27** down One hears you are still expecting a lot of baloney from this remark—and more trouble. (3,5,2,3,2,4)

16 Given dominion, it is said. (6)

18 Pine, perhaps, for what almost sounds naughty. (6)

20 Such an earthy policy doesn't leave much. (8)

23 Real gents, as they used to say, but they sound a little bumpy. (4)

24 Transportation provided with wartime entertainment—responsible for extremely good singing… (6)

25 …though the vehicle gets wrecked, making the curve. (3)

28 The result is exactly what you expect of an exit. (7)

29 See 15

30 and **31** Not truly ready when in Paris, the sense is different with such, and you shouldn't go under them. (5,9)

DOWN

1 One might on a bargain, but it doesn't imply you are scared. (5)

2 Concord is in such a state—and in great trouble! (7)

3 Where the water comes down—and does this softly on the town, then sulks. (10)

4 Perhaps a beam set wrong this way can't have much weight with it. (8)

5 A person gets a broken leg if the injury does it to him. (6)

6 and **13** across Corn, or bunion, possibly—as the hiker might get. (8)

7 Fish and make a face—or just fish? (7)

8 What some men's pants get when held up? (9)

14 The model of your sound equipment? (10)

15 Does leaving the pad mean disrobing? (6,3)

17 Rather squirrely, this, but the cure is in the making! (8)

19 Going around taking a small part in what is spoken. (7)

21 Now hear this—one is missing to make warm and homey spots. (7)

22 A put-on for some who might do it after a fight. (6)

26 Cuts what is grown on the farm. (5)

27 See 15 across

PUZZLED? No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules" send for those of Mr. Lewis to: Puzzled, The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003, or access our website at www.thenation.com/about/crossword.mhtml.

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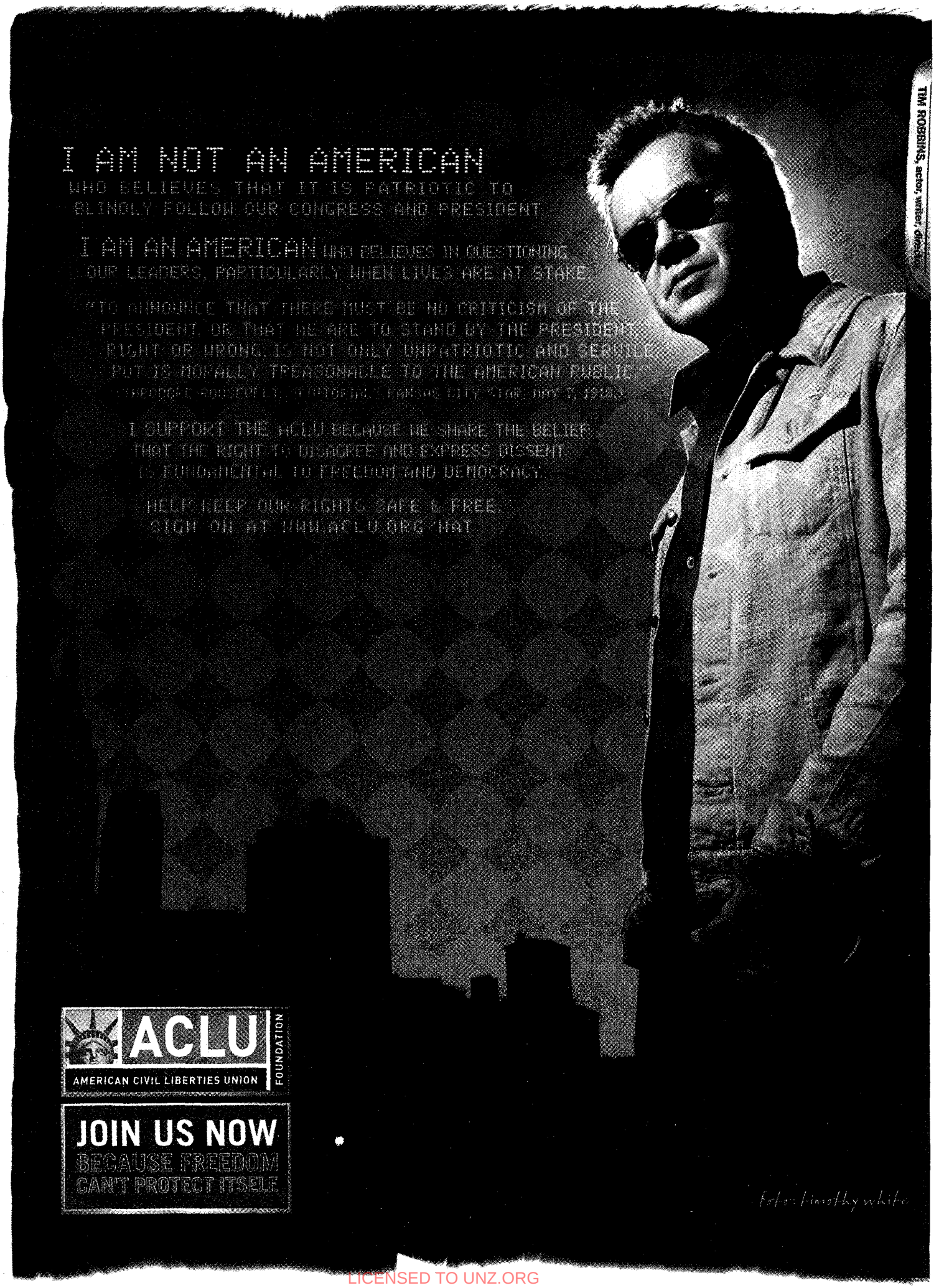
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